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ARTHUR SCHLESINGER JR.

GEN. DAVID H. PETRAEUS

AMERICA'S MAN OF THE YEAR

by William Kristol

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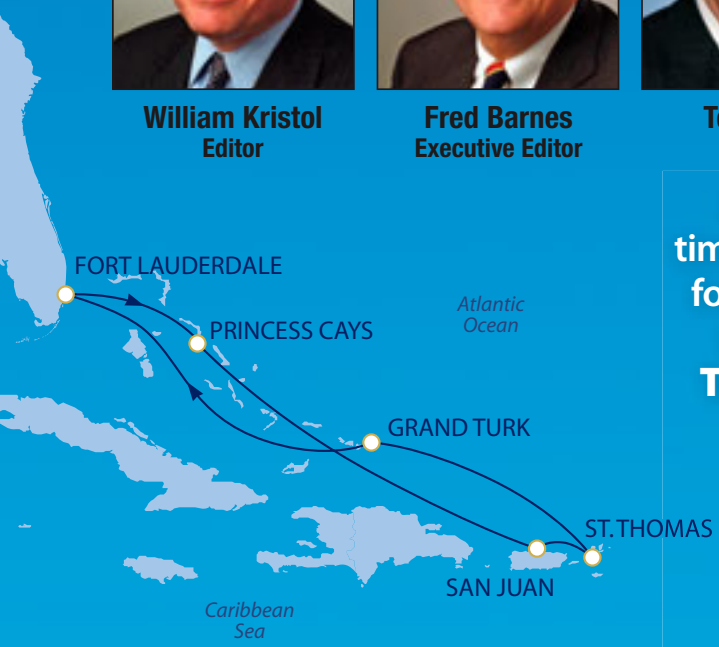

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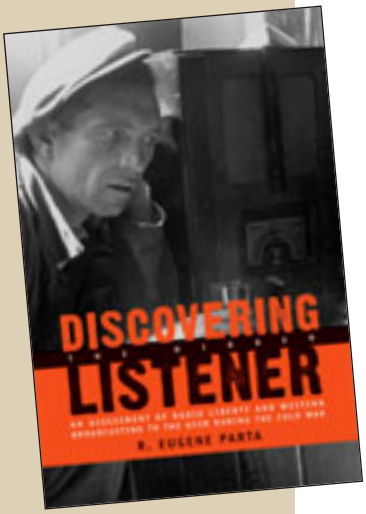

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An Assessment of Radio Liberty and Western Broadcasting to the USSR during the Cold War

BY R. EUGENE PARTA

How did Radio Liberty–the most vilified Western broadcaster in the Soviet Union–eventually amass such a vast audience that it was ultimately accepted as a legitimate participant on the Russian media scene by the authorities themselves? This book offers a quantitative overview of the impact of Western broadcasting and Radio Liberty from the listeners, perspective: How many listeners were there? Who were they? How and why did they listen? What did the broadcasts mean to them? Did they make a difference? Based on more than 50,000 interviews with Soviet citizens, the book sheds light on what these broadcasts meant to listeners as the USSR moved toward a freer society.

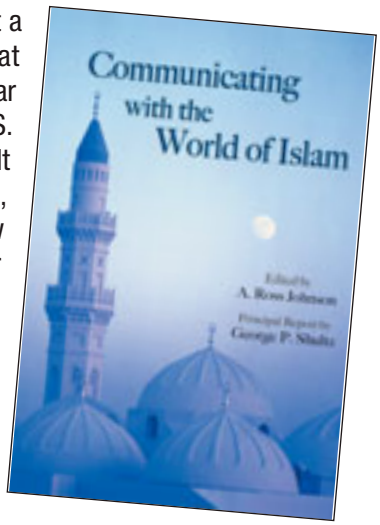
R. Eugene Parta retired as director of Audience Research and Program Evaluation for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in Prague in September 2006. He has worked in the field of international broadcasting audience research since 1969.

November 2007, 116 pages
978-0-8179-4732-3 paper $15.00

Communicating with the World of Islam

EDITED BY A. ROSS JOHNSON; PRINCIPAL REPORT BY GEORGE P. SHULTZ

Western broadcasts had a remarkable impact in the USSR and Eastern Europe during the cold war. This report, drawn from discussions at a seminar sponsored by the Annenberg Foundation Trust at Sunnylands, draws from the lessons learned in the cold war broadcasting experience to propose the best ways of organizing U.S. efforts to communicate with Islamic people around the globe. It examines the effect of Voice of America, Radio Liberty, the BBC, Radio Free Europe, and other broadcasting tools and suggests how the United States can use these instruments today to counter extremism and improve understanding of the United States in the Islamic world.



A. Ross Johnson is a Hoover fellow and former director of Radio Free Europe.

November 2007, 74 pages
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They need more support if we want a safer food supply.

Recent events have exposed weaknesses in our nation's food safety system and shaken consumer confidence in the safety of the food supply. In fact, a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) advisory panel concluded that the FDA "suffers from serious scientific deficiencies" and is not positioned to meet current or emerging food safety challenges that fall under the agency's area of responsibilities.

These results should come as no surprise. The FDA has been ignored for far too long. Over the last 15 years, the agency's budget has barely kept pace with inflation, and it is losing key staff at an alarming rate. The FDA has 800 fewer food experts than it had just four years ago – fewer inspectors, fewer scientists and fewer critical food safety staff.

Even though the FDA regulates 80 percent of America's food, it receives about one-third of the nation's food safety budget. That is unsustainable and unacceptable.

We believe Congress and the Administration need to double the FDA budget so that it can hire more highly-qualified staff and inspectors, invest in advanced technologies, build new lab facilities and expand its scientific programs. And we urge Congress and the Administration to work with the food industry and consumer groups to implement new prevention measures that will strengthen America's food safety system and protect consumers.

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THIS IS A COMBINED ISSUE. THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE WEEKLY STANDARD WILL APPEAR IN TWO WEEKS.

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The Weekly Standard (ISSN 1083-3013), a division of News America Incorporated, is published weekly (except the first week in January, third week in April, second week in July, and fourth week in August) at 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington D.C. 20036. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 50108, Boulder, CO 80322-0108. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-283-2014. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders and changes of address to The Weekly Standard, P.O. Box 50108, Boulder, CO 80322-0108. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-902-563-4723 for subscription inquiries. American Express, Visa/MasterCard payments accepted. Cover price, $3.95. Back issues, $3.95 (includes postage and handling). Send letters to the editor to The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. For a copy of The Weekly Standard Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, The Weekly Standard, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, D.C. 20036.

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BPA INTERNATIONAL

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Not So Little Sister

The Scrapbook feels abashed that it has paid so little attention over the years—indeed, has paid no attention at all in print—to Britney Spears, the pop singer, former Mouseketeer, tabloid princess, and star of our favorite female-bonding movie, *Crossroads* (2002).

We concede, there's been a lot of material to ignore: The gyrating teenage videos; the Las Vegas wedding annulled after 55 hours; the marriage to the tattooed dancer/rapper and their self-produced "reality TV" show; the two offspring in swift succession; the contentious divorce; the quick-as-a-wink stints in rehab; the home visits from child welfare agencies; the loss of parental rights; the court order against her mother; the shaved skull; the video of a cursing, bald-headed Britney wildly striking a photographer's van with a furled umbrella.

It's been an interesting few years in the life of one American celebrity. And now, The Scrapbook observes, even Britney must be astonished to learn that her 16-year-old sister, Jamie Lynn ("I would like to be like Britney, but maybe better") Spears, star of the wholesome *Zoey 101* TV program for preteens, is pregnant by her 19-year-old "former boyfriend."

This blessed event has had a number of consequences. First, Thomas Nelson, the religious publishing house, has suspended publication of a heart-warming memoir by Lynn Spears, Britney's mother, about the life of a pop-star mom. Second, it has reminded many Americans of the antiquated legal principle of an age of consent, and the laws governing statutory rape. And finally, it has prompted executives at Nickelodeon, the cable network that produces *Zoey 101*, to seize a teachable moment.

According to the Associated Press, "Nickelodeon is considering a special for its young audience about sex and love following the news that 16-year-old 'Zoey 101' star Jamie Lynn Spears is pregnant. . . . For the special, Nickelodeon said it's talking with Linda Ellerbee, the veteran newswoman who has stepped in frequently in the past with shows on talking to children about difficult issues in the news."

Difficult? We can't see anything difficult about explaining 16-year-old Jamie Lynn Spears, her pregnancy, her "former boyfriend," her sister, her mom, her extended household, and the whole phenomenon of pop culture, to children who frequently see things with clearer eyes than their elders. The Scrapbook's only concern, especially where Linda Ellerbee is concerned, is preserving the dignity of the Spears family at this special time in their lives. ♦

What He Was Thinking . . .

AFP / PATRICK KOVARIK. LIBYA'S MUAMMAR QADDAFI VISITS VERSAILLES, DECEMBER 14, 2007.

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(Classic Steiner, reprinted from our issue of February 21, 2000)

The Tragedy of SID Revisited

A few moons ago, David Brooks memorably diagnosed in these pages the heartbreaking affliction known as Status-Income Disequilibrium (SID). "The sufferers of this malady," wrote Brooks, "have jobs that give them high status but low income. They lunch on an expense account at The Palm, but dine at home on macaroni. All day long the phone-message slips pile up on their desks—calls from famous people seeking favors—but at night they realize the tub needs scrubbing, so it's down on the hands and knees with the Ajax. At work they are aristocrats, Kings of the Meritocracy, schmoozing with Felix Rohatyn. At home they are peasants, wondering if they can really afford to have orange juice every morning. Status-Income-Disequilibrium sufferers include journalists at important media outlets, editors at publishing houses, TV news producers, foundation officers, museum curators, moderately successful classical-music performers, White House aides, military brass, politicians who aren't independently wealthy, and many others. Consider the plight of the army general, who can command the movements of 100,000 men during the week but stretches to afford a Honda Accord for weekend outings. Or of poor John Sununu, who ruled the world when he was White House chief of staff but had to feed, educate, and house eight children on $125,000 a year. The disparity is not to be borne."

Now the outbreak Brooks identifed a decade ago is spreading upwards, to include New York City lawyers. Robert T. Miller, at the *First Things* blog, noticed a recent story in the *American Lawyer* reporting that "lawyers in Manhattan's elite law firms—the kinds of places where partners make $1 million a year and more—are depressed because they don't make as much money as financial professionals. . . . Apparently the differences are becoming undeniably apparent in social settings. The article describes a fundraising auction at a private school in Manhattan: When a home-cooked meal by a famous chef was being auctioned off, the doctors dropped out of the bidding at $7,000, the lawyers at $15,000, and then the bankers, private equity and hedge fund crowd got serious and fought it out among themselves, with the winning bid coming in at $40,000.

"'Face it, we have no status,' says an Am Law 100 [i.e., one of the one hundred most profitable law firms in the U.S.] partner of the pecking order at his sons' private school. 'We go to these school functions, and this well-heeled group looks right through you. They won't give you the time of day. You're just one step ahead of the doorman.'"

Amidst your Christmas celebrations, you may want to spare a thought for these sufferers. Or, you may not. As for The Scrapbook, we think the *American Lawyer* may have discovered the wellspring of John Edwards's populism. ♦

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Casual

Pick Me a Candidate

Every four years, I use the period of quiet contemplation that precedes the mad swirl of caucuses and primaries to make myself a better citizen/journalist. I do so by abandoning my usual political position of completely disengaged nihilism, upgrading to a more civically conscious indifferent cynicism.

The problem isn't that I dislike politicians, who tend to be self-involved, humorless automatons who'd rather eat their kids' pets than answer questions directly, and who spend their entire adult lives saying just about anything necessary to gain the affection of total strangers. Actually, that *is* the problem.

Some might ask how I've managed to work 12 years at a political magazine, having such a distaste for the racket. It's a fair question, one my boss asks often. That bothers me. But it's not as though I don't stay engaged enough to talk shop with the fellas. Just this morning, I was telling them that as long as he finishes at least a respectable third in Iowa, then mounts an air-assault on his opponents in New Hampshire, this Lamar Alexander could be trouble. So I do keep up.

Also, it's not as though I don't find at least something redeeming in most of the candidates to which I can relate. For instance, like my fellow evangelical Huckabee, I too tend to think that Mormons should only be trusted if their names are Donny and Marie. Like McCain, I regard myself as a war hero. Like Giuliani, I regard myself as a war hero even though I've never actually served. While the rest of the press pillories Fred Thompson for being a lazy candidate and for giving flip answers such as saying that his most prized possession is his "trophy wife," I like him. Best I can tell, he's the only candidate who has more contempt for the process than I do.

Then there are all those confusing issues. I have opinions on them, but my opinions seem to work against each other. For instance, I'm virulently against illegal immigration. In fact, I'm against legal immigration. I actually like foreigners, with their funny accents and pungent foods, but I'm tired of meeting new people. Yet I don't want illegals deported, or brought in from the shadows, at least not until they finish my siding (my man Lupe is an artist with a nail gun). They give me quality work at affordable prices. I give them tax-free income. It's win-win, when you think about it.

DARREN GYGI

Sometimes, however, it pays to get past the cosmetic concerns by which we tend to judge candidates (who has the best teeth, who has the cutest love child) and hunker down and figure out which candidate best represents our worldview. With this in mind, I hit a slew of Internet presidential candidate selectors, which vary widely in specificity of issues, but which let your conscience, or their own Boolean logic, be your guide.

I took a bunch of online issues quizzes, and won't get into the specifics of my conscience, such as it is. But the results were dispiriting. Politically, I'm not terribly complicated. I regard myself as a fiscal and social conservative with strong libertarian overtones. Turn-ons include low taxes, balanced budgets, and a robust military. Turn-offs include waging unwinnable wars, government intervention, and mean people. Also, I'm a Gemini.

But the candidate selectors seemed rather confused by this basic belief system. I suppose I must've changed some positions a few times along the way, but if Mitt Romney hasn't been penalized, why should I? According to my results, the candidate for me is everyone from Mike Huckabee to Rudy Giuliani to Ron Paul, pretty much the entire spectrum of Republican candidates. On ABC News's Match-o-Matic selector, Chris Dodd, Duncan Hunter, and Hillary Clinton were my 1-2-3 photo finish, which is odd, as I'd rather lose my right to vote than vote for any of them. By the end, I was more confused than when I'd started.

I was going to take several more tests, just to see if a consensus could be built. But as a professional apathist, I'm easily distracted. On SelectSmart.com, I grew bored with politics and got much more interested in their other selector programs, such as the Swear Word Selector, which determines what word I'd be if I were a foul one (codswallop), or the Serial Killer Selector, which approximates which serial killer I most resemble (Henry Lee Lucas). Now, I believe I'll give the Religion Selector a spin. Why not? Maybe those Mormons aren't so bad after all.

Matt Labash

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An Apology

Several passages in David Satter's "Russia Incorporated" (December 17) were taken without attribution from Jonas Bernstein's articles in the *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, published by the Jamestown Foundation. For instance—

Bernstein: "For now, however, Putin appears to be trying to maintain a balance between the warring factions: After Cherkesov's article appeared in *Kommersant*, Putin publicly scolded him, telling *Kommersant* that it is 'wrong to bring these kinds of problems to the media' and that someone who claims a war between security agencies is going on 'should, first of all, be spotless.' Yet the following day, Putin created a new state committee to fight illegal drugs and named Cherkesov as its chief" (*Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Nov. 2, 2007).

Satter: "Putin appears to be trying to maintain a balance between the warring sides. After Cherkesov's article appeared in *Kommersant*, Putin publicly criticized him, saying it is 'wrong to bring these kinds of problems to the media.' Yet the following day, Putin created a new state committee to fight illegal drugs and named Cherkesov as its chief."

The Weekly Standard and the author apologize to Mr. Bernstein, to the Jamestown Foundation, and to our readers. We also commend to our readers the articles by Mr. Bernstein that served as source material: "Finansgroup: How Russia's Siloviki Do Business," EDM, Nov. 30, 2007; "Stanislav Belkovsky: Putin Will Leave Power Completely," EDM, Nov. 19, 2007; and "St. Petersburg Poisonings: Part of Siloviki Factional Fight?" EDM, Nov. 2, 2007. All of these may be found at the *Eurasia Daily Monitor* website, www.jamestown.org/edm.

Calvin and Theocracy

I much enjoyed Charlotte Allen's excellent dissection of Mark Lilla's *The Stillborn God* ("Look Out Below," December 17) but was perplexed at her assertion that Calvin's *Institutes* "formed the basis for some of the very few genuine theocracies in the long history of Christianity." Though I would not want to make too much of a side comment, I must ask if this is the same *Institutes* in which Calvin excoriated those who believed that a Christian polity should reinstitute Old Testament law: "The law of God given through Moses is (not) dishonored when it is abrogated and new laws are preferred to it … for the Lord … did not give that law to be proclaimed among all nations and to be in force everywhere. Rather we must make our laws with regard to the condition of times, place and nation…. How malicious and hateful toward public welfare would a man be who is offended by such diversity…?"

Allen does not say where such "theocracies" existed, but I will take the usual candidate, Geneva. It could perhaps be called "Calvin's Geneva" in the sense that, yes, Calvin did in fact live in Geneva for half of his life and pastored a church there. But he held no political office in that self-governing Swiss city-state, and tried to get away from it so he could study in peace. True, he did lend a hand, when asked, in drafting laws: He was, after all, a highly trained French lawyer with a dissertation on Seneca. He worked to improve the sewage system and devised plans for creating employment for the refugees who flooded the city. In what might be an ambiguous blessing, Rousseau, in *Du Contrat Social*, praised his legal work.

Studies of Calvin's politics indicate that he advocated a mixed regime with a bias toward democracy. Thus, it would be no accident that America's Calvinist clergy supported the Revolution and the Constitution.

Paul Marshall
Washington, D.C.

Charlotte Allen responds: Paul Marshall makes some valid points about Calvin's relation to Geneva. Like many large European cities during that time, Geneva was indeed something of a democracy, governed by a lay council. Still, it was Calvin's theology that governed the form of worship and strict rules of moral conduct that the council enforced.

A Return to Restraint

The conservative movement owes Fred Barnes a debt of gratitude for reminding us in "The Case Against Despair" (December 3) that it is certainly possible to reduce the size of government and still survive politically, as the congressional Republicans did from 1995-1997.

But contrary to the estimable Dick Armey's indication in Barnes's article, the successful spending cuts in the mid-1990s did not come about merely because Speaker Newt Gingrich ordered Appropriations chairman Bob Livingston (my former boss) to do so. Instead, as Gingrich graciously noted in his book *To Renew America*, Livingston took Gingrich's already-bold request for a $6 billion recission package (to offset a military and disaster-relief package) and "courageously" upped the ante to the $16 billion in cuts noted earlier. And the explosion in spending that finally began in the fiscal year 1999 occurred not because appropriators "chafed" under the discipline, but because of an ill-considered strategic decision by House leadership in September 1998 to approve more spending in exchange for holding GOP moderates in line on the leadership's preferred impeachment procedures. It was only after that dam was busted in 1998 (and after Livingston left Congress) that appropriators reverted to their pre-1995 form and began energetically leading the hogs to the federal trough.

Now if only Republicans would re-adopt their limited-government ideals, the GOP could again attract both the old-style Goldwater libertarians and the more centrist voters who rallied behind Ross Perot in large part because of Perot's call for balanced budgets. They would also, of course, be serving the country well by demonstrating principled leadership.

Quin Hillyer
Alexandria, Va.

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Gen. David Petraeus, Man of the Year

I remember the excitement. It was the week before Christmas a year ago, and I had lazily picked up my copy of *Time* magazine. And there it was: *Time*'s Person of the Year for 2006 is "You."

Wow! We deserved credit, *Time* judged, "for seizing the reins of the global media, for founding and framing the new digital democracy, for working for nothing and beating the pros at their own game." Thanks, *Time*!

And thanks for not choosing the obvious alternative—Nancy Pelosi, who had led the Democratic takeover of Congress. That takeover, *Time* editors and many others hoped, heralded our withdrawal from Iraq. However much they may have desired that outcome, *Time* was lucky not to select Pelosi. In the subsequent 12 months, she and her colleagues failed to impose a defeat in Iraq. Instead, President Bush announced a new strategy and a new commander, General David Petraeus, in January 2007. And all the real achievements of this year belong to them.

STEFAN ZAKLIN / EPA / CORBIS

We are now winning the war. To say this was not inevitable is an understatement. Even those of us who were early advocates and strong supporters of the surge, and who thought it could succeed, knew the situation had so deteriorated that success was by no means guaranteed. Two military experts told me early in 2007 that they thought the odds of success were, respectively, 1-in-3 and 1-in-4. They nonetheless supported the surge because, even at those odds, it was a gamble worth taking, so devastating would be the consequences of withdrawal and defeat. We at The Weekly Standard thought the chances of success were better than 50-50—but that it remained a difficult proposition.

Petraeus pulled it off. The war is not over, of course. Too quick and deep a drawdown—which some in the Pentagon and elsewhere in the Bush administration are, appallingly, pushing for—could throw away the amazing success that has been achieved. Still: It is as clear as anything can be in this world, where we judge through a glass darkly, that General David H. Petraeus is, in fact, America's man of the year.

Time ludicrously chose to make Russia's ex-KGB agent-turned president Vladimir Putin its cover boy. They just couldn't make Petraeus man—oops—person of the year. Our liberal elites are so invested in a narrative of defeat and disaster in Iraq that to acknowledge the prospect of victory would be too head-wrenching and heart-rending. It would mean giving credit to George W. Bush, for one. And it would mean acknowledging American success in a war *Time*, and the Democratic party, and the liberal elites, had proclaimed lost.

The editors couldn't acknowledge their mugging by reality. That's fine. Nonetheless, reality exists. And the reality is that in Iraq, after mistakes and failures, thanks to the leadership of Bush, Petraeus, and General Ray Odierno—the day-to-day commander whose contributions shouldn't be overlooked—we are winning.

The reality is also this: The counterinsurgency campaign that Petraeus and Odierno conceived and executed in 2007 was as comprehensive a counterinsurgency strategy as has ever been executed. The heart of the strategy was a brilliant series of coordinated military operations throughout the entire theater. Petraeus and Odierno used conven-

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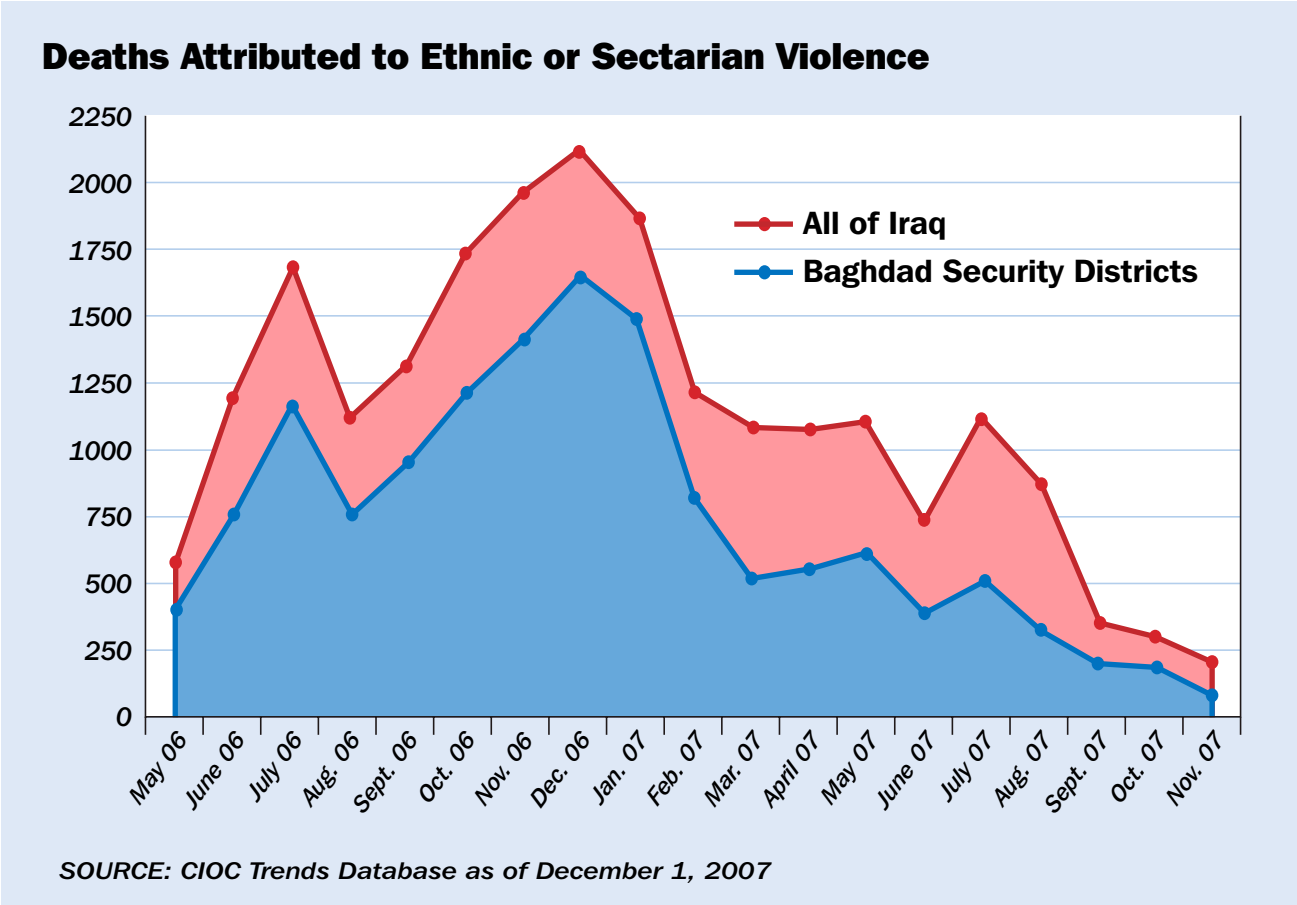

tional U.S. forces, Iraqi military and police, and Iraqi and U.S. Special Operations forces to strike enemy strongholds throughout Iraq simultaneously, while also working to protect the local populations from enemy responses. Successive operations across the theater knocked the enemy—both al Qaeda and Sunni militias, and Shia extremists—off balance and then prevented them from recovering. U.S. and Iraqi forces, supported by local citizens, chased the enemy from area to area, never allowing them the breathing space to reestablish safe havens, much less new bases. It wasn't "whack-a-mole" or "squeezing the water balloon" as some feared (and initially claimed)—it was the relentless pursuit of an increasingly defeated enemy.

That defeat has implications far beyond Iraq. In 2007, Iraq's Sunni Arabs fought with us against al Qaeda, and Iraq's Shia Arabs joined with us to fight Iranian-backed Shia militias. So much for the notion that Americans were doomed to fail in their efforts to mobilize moderate Muslims against jihadists. The progress in Iraq in 2007 represents a strategic breakthrough for the broader Middle East whose importance would be hard to overstate.

One additional point: Petraeus's counterinsurgency stands out not just for its conceptual ambition and the skill of its execution but for its humanity. There were those who argued that the U.S. military could not succeed in counterinsurgency because Americans were not tough and bloodthirsty enough. They said that brutality was essential in subduing insurgents and our humanity would be our downfall.

They were wrong. The counterinsurgency campaign of 2007 was probably the most precise, discriminate, and humane military operation ever undertaken on such a scale. Our soldiers and Marines worked hard—and took risks and even casualties—to ensure, as much as possible, that they hurt only enemies. Compared with any previous military operations of this size, they were astonishingly successful. The measure of their success lies in the fact that so many Iraqis now see American troops as friends and protectors. Petraeus and his generals have shown that Americans can fight insurgencies and win—and still be Americans. For that and so much else, he is the man of the year.

—*William Kristol*

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A Nation of Dim Bulbs

The nasty little surprise hidden in the new energy bill.

BY ANDREW FERGUSON

GARY LOCKE

On December 19, President Bush signed an energy bill that will, among many, many other things, force you to buy a new kind of light bulb. He did this because environmental enthusiasts don't like the light bulbs you're using now. He and they reason, therefore, that you shouldn't be allowed to have them. So now you can't.

Ordinary consumers may be surprised, once they understand what's happened. They probably haven't known that the traditional incandescent light bulb, that happy little globe shining so innocently from the lamp in the corner, has been a scourge of environmentalists for many years. With their stern and unrelenting moralism, the warriors of Greenpeace have even branded lightbulb manufacturers "climate criminals" for making incandescents, which are, they say, a "silent killer." In Europe and in a few individual states in the U.S., professional environmentalists have managed to persuade their colleagues in government to ban the bulbs altogether, on the grounds that incandescents use energy inefficiently.

Ninety percent of the energy a traditional light bulb uses, for example, is thrown off as heat rather than light. This waste contributes to the overproduction of energy from coal-fired power plants, which contributes to the emission of carbon dioxide, which contributes to global warming. Professional environmentalists prefer a different kind of bulb, the compact fluorescent light (CFL), which is much more expensive to make and to buy but also much more efficient in its use of energy.

American environmental groups have long called for an outright national ban on the old-fashioned bulbs. But then they came to the realization, as a spokesman for the Natural Resources Defense Council told the *New York Times* this spring, that such a ban might "anger consumers." "We've given up a sound bite, 'ban the incandescent,'" the spokesman said.

Instead the groups joined with the Bush administration this year in advocating a steady increase in federally mandated efficiency standards for light bulbs. The effect of the tightened standards is to make it illegal to manufacture or sell the inefficient incandescent bulb by 2014. So it's not a ban, see. It's just higher standards. Which have the same effect as a ban—a slow-motion ban that's not really a ban. Not surprisingly, in long, self-congratulatory remarks at the bill signing last week, Bush neglected to mention that he and Congress have just done away with the incandescent light bulb. Maybe most of us won't notice until he's back in Crawford.

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Some people really like the new bulbs, of course. Not all of them are professional environmentalists, though all of them are cheapskates. CFLs produce the same amount of light (lumens) as an incandescent bulb while using only about a quarter of the watts. With proper care and moderate use, they can last as much as six times longer than a typical incandescent. Even if you consider their higher purchase price—six or seven times the price of a traditional bulb—CFLs can lower your monthly lighting bill by as much as 20 percent. And because they're deemed environmentally sensitive, switching them on can give you the same hard-to-define feeling of exaltation you get shopping for organic vegetables at Whole Foods. Then you can donate the money you've saved on your electric bill to the Natural Resources Defense Council or the George W. Bush Presidential Library.

Other people, however, perhaps a very large number, will prefer the old, pre-Bush bulbs. Their reasons have less to do with the wonderfulness of the incandescent and their disdain for environmentalists than with the inconveniences of the CFL. The new bulbs are particularly vulnerable to extremes of temperature, for example; you won't want to use them in your garage in winter. CFLs are also 25 percent longer in size than the average incandescent. This makes them unsuitable for all kinds of lighting fixtures—particularly chandeliers and other ceiling lights—which will have to be either discarded or reconfigured, at considerable expense, after the Bush ban goes into effect. You can't use most CFLs with dimmer switches, either; ditto timers. Newer models that can be dimmed and are adaptable to timers will require you to buy new CFL-compatible dimmers and timers.

The quality of the light given off by CFLs is quite different from what we're used to from incandescents. The old bulb concentrates its light through a small surface area. CFLs don't shine in beams; they glow all the way around, diffusing their illumination. They're terrible reading lights. Many people find fluorescent light itself to be harsh and unpleasant. Moreover—in a variation of the old joke about the restaurant that serves awful food and, even worse, serves it in such small portions—a CFL bulb can take two to three minutes to reach its full illumination after being turned on. And once it's fully aglow, according to Department of Energy guidelines, you need to leave it on for at least 15 minutes. In a typically chipper, pro-ban article last week, *U.S. News and World Report* explained why: "Turning a CFL on and off frequently shortens its life."

Odd, isn't it—an energy-saving device that you're not supposed to turn off? Such complications undermine the extravagant claims made for the CFLs' energy savings. Let's say you're a CFL aficionado and you want to fetch your car keys from your darkened bedroom: You switch on the light, wait a couple minutes, finally find the wallet as the room slowly brightens, and then leave the light on, because you don't want to shorten the life of your expensive CFL. Will you remember to go back and turn it off 15 minutes later? Or will you get in your Prius, drive to Whole Foods, and leave the light burning for several more hours while you absentmindedly fondle the organics? If you're not a CFL aficionado, by contrast, you turn on the incandescent light, get your car keys, and then switch it off. Who's wasting more energy? I'm sure some green-eye-shade in the depths of the Department of Energy could calculate an answer, and maybe already has. But we're unlikely to hear about it.

> The new bulbs contain mercury. If one breaks in your home, EPA guidelines suggest you open windows and leave the room for at least a quarter of an hour before trying to clean up the mess.

Sam Kazman, of the antiregulation Competitive Enterprise Institute, likes to cite the now legendary Great Light Bulb Exchange sponsored by a local power company in the tiny town of Traer, Iowa. Half the town's residents turned in their incandescents for free CFLs—and electricity consumption rose by 8 percent. The cost of burning electricity went down, and demand increased. Funny how that happens.

There are other complications that might give environmentalists pause, if they were the kind of people who paused. When a CFL bulb finally dies—after years and years and years!—it cannot be dropped in the trash like an incandescent; it must be recycled by specially equipped recycling facilities. CFLs contain mercury. If one breaks in your home, Kazman says, EPA guidelines suggest you open windows and leave the room for at least a quarter of an hour before trying to clean up the mess. And for God's sakes don't use a vacuum, which could disperse the poison into the air. Even when they're intact, *U.S. News* happily tells us, "the bulbs must be handled with caution. Using a drop cloth might be a good new routine to develop when screwing in a light bulb."

The mind reels at the joke-like possibilities: How many Bush administration officials does it take to screw in a CFL? As many as it takes to screw American consumers! But the Bushies aren't the half of it. In creating the ban, Bush and his environmentalist allies were joined by Philips Lighting, which is—you should probably sit down—the world's foremost manufacturer of CFLs. The phased-in ban will position Philips to crowd from the market any troublesome competitors. It's a perfect confluence of interests: the Big Environmental Lobby, Big Business, and Big Government Conservatives.

But back to the screwees—those American consumers, also known, not so long ago, as the citizens of the United States, a free people, rulers of the world's proudest self-governing nation. Will there be protests of some kind, expressions of disgust at least? And what if there aren't? What if, as the ban slowly tightens, we hear nothing, not a howl, not a peep, just a long mellow moo? Then maybe it really will be time to turn out the lights. ♦

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Vox Huckabee

The Republican as class warrior.

BY TERRY EASTLAND

Aboard the Huckabus

I'm riding across Iowa in a tour bus carrying members of the press assigned to cover Mike Huckabee, after whom the bus is named. Huckabus: Is there a candidate whose name has inspired the creation of so many new words? Think Huckaboom (for the candidate's surge in the polls, which has him leading the Republican field in Iowa) and Huckabust (for the candidate's impending demise, predicted by some hopeful observers). Huck is the root from which you can invent your own Huckaword. This marketing-savvy campaign hardly minds the many uses of Huck. Even the unflattering ones remind people of a certain candidate for president. You're going to remember the name Huckabee—a precondition, if you think about it, for giving the candidate your vote.

On this cold and overcast day in late December, in a blitz of cities and towns between Des Moines and Cedar Rapids, Huckabee actually makes his surname a critical piece of his closing argument. He observes that in the Declaration of Independence the nation's Founding Fathers did "something pretty amazing," for they recognized that "the intrinsic value and worth of every human being lies in their uniqueness as defined by God." It's not something they get from "their government or their ancestry or their ethnicity or their net worth or where they live or the last name they have."

As he has throughout the year, Huckabee grounds his pro-life position in the Declaration's recognition of the inalienable right to life. But now, in the heat of the campaign, with the Iowa caucuses just days away, he also uses the Declaration to argue that, in light of its recognition that all men are created equal, any man (or woman) can become president. Even someone like him, the son of working class parents in Hope, Arkansas, the first in his "entire male lineage" to graduate from high school, much less go to college. He put himself through college in just "two years and three months," since four years would have cost too much.

> Though he still says his goal is to place in the top three, any finish other than first, given his lead in the polls, would be a setback to his campaign, perhaps a fatal one.

Now, as it happens, there are some who don't recognize that any American can become president. One "Republican muckety-muck," as Huckabee called the unfortunate former Bush aide Dan Bartlett, "made the comment that nobody would ever elect a guy with the last name 'Huckabee.' It was a name that sounded too much like a hick." Bartlett didn't quite say that—he actually praised Huckabee as "the most visionary" candidate while noting that he had the "negativity of something he can't change like his given last name." Huckabee says he doesn't care about what Bartlett said. But plainly he does.

"To me," he tells the rally in Marshalltown, "'Huckabee' sounds like an old-fashioned, hard-working family that believes that if you work real hard in this country you can get somewhere. If that doesn't mean anything anymore, then the Founding Fathers were wrong. But I don't believe that. I believe they were right. I think you are worth as much as anyone else."

As the case of Bartlett shows, Huckabee is not shy about criticizing members of his own party. He couldn't care less, it seems, whether he wins many votes (at least in Iowa and the early primaries) from the Republican "establishment" (his term) or from the Republican rich (often one and the same). And he makes humorous reference to his name to distinguish himself from those Republicans.

"Many of you will have noticed that I grew up with a last name that opened a lot of doors," he says. Lowering his voice, speaking as though he were an admissions officer, or the guard at a fancy club, he continues, "'Well, he's a Huckabee, we better let him in.'" The crowd loves it. He continues: "In my family, 'summer' was never a verb"—the way it is for some. "We summered in hay fields, chicken yards, and all kinds of stuff."

The battle for Iowa is between Huckabee and Mitt Romney, who has criticized Huckabee on numerous matters—among them illegal immigration (the Arkansan is too soft), national security and foreign policy (he's naive about Iran, too impressed with diplomacy, dared criticize Bush), and his 10-year record as governor of Arkansas (raised taxes, spent too much, pardoned too many). The conventional wisdom in the press is that, notwithstanding Iowa's famous reputation for penalizing those who run negative campaigns, Romney may have halted Huckabee's remarkable surge and may have a shot at winning.

To judge by Huckabee's performance at these rallies, the Romney assault has put the former governor on the defensive. While he dis-

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cusses his own positions—for the fair tax, for energy independence, for a new approach to health care—he also devotes more than a little time to responding to Romney's multi-pronged attacks. Referring to Romney simply as "my opponent," Huckabee calls the attacks "dishonest and desperate," and says, "If you want a president who gets elected because he attacks the other guy, then I'm probably not going to be your choice."

It's clear that Huckabee doesn't like Romney, but not just because Romney has gone negative. Huckabee doesn't like what Romney represents: someone who has the means to outspend him in Iowa 20 to 1 (a ratio Huckabee constantly points out), someone who can "buy" Iowa and perhaps the GOP nomination. America, he tells supporters in Marshalltown, "is not about the people born on third base and who think they just hit a triple. It's about people who start from nowhere."

Huckabee is the one Republican candidate in the race who has talked often about working class and middle class Americans and the anxieties they have even in an economy that by the numbers looks pretty good. In an interview aboard the Huckabus, the candidate once again discussed the economic situation of "people at the lower ends of the economic scale," who because of rising energy, health care, and education prices "don't have the same level of disposable income they had this time a year ago."

The real story of the Huckabee campaign is that his candidacy contemplates a refashioning of the Republican party to address the concerns of middle and working class Americans. Thus, while it's true that many of these Americans are also religious conservatives—and true, too, that Huckabee leads among Iowa's religious conservatives by a very wide margin—it's a mistake to think that his campaign is narrowly pitched to that group of voters.

Huckabee has yet to fashion economic policies that might appeal to middle and working class voters—"Sam's Club Republicans," as they have been called, in contrast to the old "country club Republicans." But at some point his campaign presumably will have to offer policies to match his rhetoric.

ERIC THAYER / GETTY IMAGES

What was striking about the rallies I saw was the extent to which Huckabee hopes to make common cause with people like himself—"who don't necessarily have the right pedigree . . . or the right last name . . . or all the resources"—in order to defeat his opponents. Thus, in Waterloo, he told the audience, "Nothing more gets to the heart of what we are than to say that no matter where you came from, or what your last name is, or what your parents were, or what they do for a living, you matter. You may not pick where you started from, but you have every opportunity to decide where you end up." That "you" is not an impersonal usage. As he told the audience, "I've lived the life many of you have lived."

As for his opponents, they include not just the Republican establishment but also evangelical leaders he regards as part of the establishment; the "chattering class" of both old and new media; and secularists hostile to expressions of faith in public life. In Cedar Rapids, before a gathering of the Iowa Christian Alliance, Huckabee defended the TV Christmas ad in which he mentions "the birth of Christ." He remarked on "the level of true religious bigotry that exists in our culture—that for those of us who are people of faith, it's okay to have it but please keep it to yourselves."

Last July, when I reported on Huckabee's efforts in this state—and he was at 1 or 2 percent in the polls—his rhetoric was much less populist. Nor had he acquired these opponents. His campaign lacked the sense of grievance that shows up in it now. But the crowds now are much larger, and they respond well, leaving Huckabee increasingly confident that he can hold his lead through January 3. Though he still says his goal is to place in the top three, any finish other than first, given his lead in the polls, would be a setback to his campaign, perhaps a fatal one.

With so much at stake, Huckabee, 12 years a Baptist pastor, rises to the occasion in closing these rallies. He urges his audience to "stop and think about" the fact that "my opponent has outspent me 20 to 1." He assumes their solidarity: "Some of you in this room feel like your whole life you've had the odds against you. . . . You know how frustrating it can be." He explains that the reason he is ahead is that "there are a lot of Americans who feel like they've got odds about 20 to 1 stacked against them. They

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know they don't have the last name that opens the door. They know they don't have the pedigree [or] . . . the friend in high places that gets things done for them. They like to believe that a guy who lives their life can become president." Why? "Because they know if that can happen still in this country, then we're a nation that cannot be bought off"—meaning by the likes of Mitt Romney. Nor can we be told what to do "by those chattering-class folks in Washington and Wall Street who think the world is all about them." And as for the Republican establishment, to Huckabee, it's us versus them:

> They don't mind having us vote for them. They don't mind having us empower them. They don't mind even coming and patting us on the head and telling us they'll think very seriously about taking to heart the issues we think important. But when they get elected, they forget who we are and they never push the issues we think are important. And they are scared to death that someone who isn't part of them might actually get elected and might actually go to Washington with a view saying "I do know where I come from and I haven't forgotten where I've been and I go for all those people whose odds are stacked against them 20 to 1."

Huckabee sees Iowa as nothing less than the beginning of the change he envisions. "Folks," he closed his speech in Marshalltown,

> if we can do it, we'll change politics in this country and we won't turn it upside down but we'll turn it right side up, like it ought to. That's what America is supposed to be. Not a nation of a ruling class and a servant class. The way our Founding Fathers had it, the ruling class is the regular folks out there voting, the servant class is the one who gets elected. We're not elected to be the ruling class, we were elected to be the servant class serving the people who are the ruling class. Let's make that happen.

If it does, look for a profusion of new Huckawords to describe the shifting political landscape. ♦

Thompson's Waterloo (Iowa)

Is he Napoleon or Wellington?

BY STEPHEN F. HAYES

AP PHOTO / DAVE WEAVER

Waterloo, Iowa

Forty-five minutes before Fred Thompson spoke here last Tuesday night, young volunteers greeted reporters and potential Iowa voters just inside the front door of the Waterloo Center for the Arts. A thermometer down the street reported the temperature as 22 degrees, and the wind made it colder. Even inside, the frigid air gave those manning the registration table an icy blast every time anyone opened the door.

A young man with a "Fred Thompson" button stood by a table with coffee and hot tea. He introduced himself to another volunteer, and they chatted about their reasons for supporting the former senator from Tennessee. It was a ritual that has played out countless times across Iowa—something Mitt Romney's volunteers were probably doing more than a year ago.

After the candidate and his wife, Jeri, arrived and were introduced, Thompson took the stage. He warmed up his audience with a joke about the weather. It's freezing back in Washington, too, he assured them.

"It was cold—it got so cold that the politicians had their hands in their own pockets," he said. People laughed out loud. Over the next 25 minutes, Thompson portrayed himself as a limited-government conservative whose values are in line with Iowa Republicans. He boasted about his endorsement the day before by Steve King, the conservative Republi-

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can who represents Iowa's Fifth District. He pointed to a column by the *Des Moines Register*'s David Yepsen, the state's most influential columnist, saying Thompson could still excite conservatives. And he delivered the kind of conservative message many in the crowd said they'd been waiting for since the campaign began.

Much of the speech was the political equivalent of chum. On national security: "The best way out of the fight is to be stronger than your adversary." On the Democrats: "the left-wing, big government, high taxing, weak-on-national security Democratic party." On his Republican opponents: "You're not electing a set of plans, you're electing a leader."

Thompson made much of his strong showing at the last Republican debate, when he refused the moderator's request for a show of hands on global warming. The other candidates, he reminded the crowd, followed his lead. "I don't know how you're going to stand up to leaders of Iran and North Korea if you can't stand up to an overbearing moderator." More applause.

After taking several questions from the audience, Thompson asks the crowd for its support on caucus night, then makes his way into the crowd to shake hands. As he chats with voters, Dierks Bentley's "Free and Easy Down the Road I Go" comes blaring from the sound system.

Ain't no tellin' where the wind might blow
Free and easy down the road I go
Livin' life like a Sunday stroll
Free and easy down the road I go
Free and easy down the road I go

If you only get to go around one time
I'm gonna sit back and try to enjoy the ride

If the Republican nomination were decided only by performances like this, Fred Thompson—whose policy views make him the most mainstream conservative in the race—would be on a glide-path to the Republican nomination.

It's not. And it is Thompson's lackluster effort in all of those other areas of a campaign that has him running a distant third in most polls less than two weeks from the Iowa caucuses. But a strange set of circumstances—the two current Iowa frontrunners cutting each other apart and two former national frontrunners essentially skipping the caucuses—means that despite his late start Thompson may still have a chance to emerge from Iowa as one of three or four candidates with a real shot at the nomination.

"Iowa is critical to our campaign, and it may in fact be everything to our campaign," says a Thompson official. "If we don't do what we need to do in Iowa, it will be tough to compete effectively down the road."

From the beginning, Thompson said he would run a different kind of campaign. He shared his philosophy about the process in an interview at his McLean home shortly after he first acknowledged publicly that he was considering a bid.

"The world changes so rapidly and politics do too," he said. "And not only has technology changed, but now a lot of the primaries have changed, and the question is whether the old way of looking at things still applies to these new sets of circumstances in all cases. I don't think they do."

You mean in terms of timing?

"Well, in terms of everything. In terms of timing, in terms of the role of money, in terms of the timing of the money, in terms of all the steps that you traditionally need to make and when you need to make them. The conventional wisdom, from all I can tell, is that you need years of preparation. And if that's the case, I'm already out."

He continued by offering an analogy.

> You know, Winston Churchill used to spend most of his day, I guess a good part of it, in bed dictating, even in the height of the war. If I remember history correctly, he would dictate, you know, have a cigar and a brandy and—the good old days—and dictate. I saw one time a history thing, history program that interviewed his secretary who was obviously an elderly lady. And Winston would dictate just

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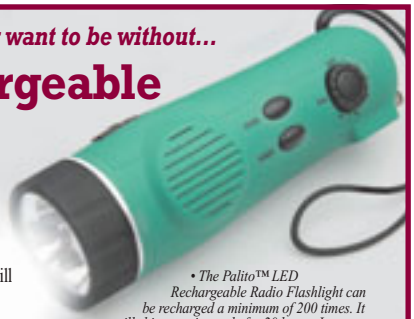

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page after page after page after page. In the height of the war, he'd get up at 1 o'clock and go on about his business. But the point is, and she said, it's hard to believe, and she said for every hour of speech he made, he prepared ten hours. So at the height of the war, when everybody's scrambling around and everybody panicking and you can imagine the meetings that were being held, his emphasis was on the communications to the British people. And what do we remember? Those meetings? Scrambling around? No, we remember those phrases and we remember how he inspired those people. We still, when we get a chance, we listen to the exact words he used.

And, you know, different times, totally different circumstances, different country. But there's a grain of something there that everybody who aspires to be a leader ought to keep in mind.

Before his speech in Waterloo, Thompson spent part of his afternoon in Waverly, Iowa, population 9,000. He rolled into town on a rock 'n' roll style tour bus with an oversized picture of him on the side. It read: "The Clear Conservative Choice: Hands Down." His driver pulled up in front of the modest one-story building that houses the *Waverly Democrat*. Across the street, several stores sit empty. The "Sub-City" sandwich shop, located in an old gas station, is closed. The Pepsi sign in front looks like it has been there since the 1950s. A small group of Waverly citizens have waited in the cold for twenty minutes to meet the former senator.

When the door to the bus swings open, Thompson's wife, Jeri, emerges first. She skips down the stairs and thrusts her hand toward the first person she sees. "Hi, I'm Jeri Thompson," she says cheerfully, offering a warm smile. Fred follows her lead. As he lumbers toward the door of the newspaper's headquarters, he makes small talk with those who have come to see him. He is cordial, even friendly, but his wife outshines him.

After a quick meeting with the staff of the newspaper, Thompson climbs aboard the bus for the four-block drive to the gleaming new building that houses the fire department. He and Jeri walk down the line of firemen assembled to greet him. When someone presents him with a fireman's helmet to wear for a photo-op, Thompson holds the helmet away from him to get a good look at it and laughs. "I've got a silly-hat rule that I'm about to violate," he says, raising it toward his head before thinking better of it. "I ain't gonna do it," he says, laughing.

"I'll put it on," Jeri says with a wide grin. "I'll be the good sport. I get lots of points for this, guys." And indeed she did; the firemen laughed along with her as they posed for pictures.

Thompson paused for a few more pictures on his way back to the bus. Brad Gade, an insurance representative from nearby Cedar Falls, asked Thompson to autograph a "Days of Thunder" DVD box, and "Big John" obliges. Gade says he is a conservative Republican who recently decided to

MICHAEL RAMIREZ

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caucus for Thompson on January 3. He says Thompson seems "down to earth and easy to relate to." That's something he hasn't found in other candidates. "I looked a lot at Huckabee—but that recent stuff that's come out. . . " What stuff? "He's so heavily into religion," says Gade, wrinkling his nose. "Not my cup of tea."

Later, I spoke to Scott and Chelle Adkins, a young couple from Waterloo. Chelle is the secretary of the Blackhawk County Republican party, and Scott has had a leadership position with the party, too. Like Brad Gade, they have considered other candidates. "Mitt Romney came close for me," says Scott. "But there was just something missing. Huckabee appeals because of social issues, but I'm not so sure about fiscal issues."

Chelle jumps in. "A month ago, Huckabee looked like he might be a great candidate. But the more I research his positions, the less comfortable I become." I asked her for specifics. "Two things—illegal immigration and the taxes. I'd seen lots of advertising on how he raised taxes, how he was for a cigarette tax. I was really turned off on illegal immigration, too."

"You can't trust what you get from the media," Scott said, as I furiously took notes. "So we researched it."

The ads they're talking about are Mitt Romney contrast ads, designed to paint Huckabee as soft on crime and illegal immigration and liberal on taxes. There is a lot of anecdotal evidence—now backed by some polling—that suggests they're accomplishing that much. But is Romney peeling voters away from Huckabee and sending them toward Fred Thompson?

Thompson advisers are counting on it. They believe a slice-and-dice fight on the ground here creates an opening for their candidate, though Thompson has very little money to spend on paid media. Instead, he is running around the state talking to every talk radio host who will have him on and dropping by small-town newspapers with the hope that they will run stories about the visit.

The priority, these advisers say, is getting Iowans to connect Thompson's well-known face with his name. This worked in Tennessee when Thompson first ran for Senate, and they think it could help them again in a much smaller state. Even his bumper stickers have a picture of the candidate.

So in the end, it could mostly come down to Fred, which is how he envisioned it even before he decided to run.

"Most of these campaigns are still the candidates," he said. "The money, the organization, the preparation—all that's very important, but it's less than 50 percent. The most of it puts on one pair of shoes every morning and goes out. And it's important that that person knows exactly what they're doing."

Free and easy down the road he goes. ♦

Hill-A-Copter Down

Is Hillary the "change" Iowa wants?

By Jonathan V. Last

Ottumwa, Iowa

"You know, there's a lot of talk about change in this election," Hillary Clinton told a Des Moines gathering of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees. "And there should be. But you know, change happens, whether you do anything or not. The world is always changing. Our challenge is: How do we master that change and make it work for America again? Everybody's got ideas about change. You know, some people think you get change by demanding it. Some people think you get change by hoping for it. But I believe you get change by working really hard. . . . I've been a change-maker for 35 years."

During a four-minute stretch Clinton used the word change 15 times. Which is exactly what her campaign has done in Iowa over the last few weeks.

Clinton had been leading the polls here since the end of summer. She had run an error-free campaign, with the exception of one debate gaffe where she endorsed giving driver's licenses to illegal immigrants. But Barack Obama began rising in late August, and in the last week of November he passed Clinton in some polls. So Clinton made some changes.

In a daring display of brazenness, she attacked Obama for both fundraising improprieties and excessive ambition. New Hampshire co-chair Bill Shaheen was trotted out to question the past drug use Obama himself had freely admitted in a memoir published 12 years ago—and was promptly jettisoned from the campaign when the attack backfired. Clinton even ditched the campaign's theme song, Celine Dion's "You and I." And after months of promoting the idea of "strength and experience" on the stump, she pivoted to talk about her biography and the mantra of "change."

The "change" campaign was rolled out during a five-day, 99-county barnstorming tour which saw Clinton hopping from town to town in the "Hill-A-Copter." (This was not the first ill-named vehicle on the Clinton campaign; in the fall she took a short tour aboard a bus

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MICHAEL RAMIREZ

dubbed "The Middle Class Express," which sounds like cut-price airline seating.)

Joined by President Clinton, Magic Johnson, retired general Wesley Clark, and other surrogates, Clinton remade her pitch to Iowans, in both form and substance. She abandoned the lectern and took to striding back and forth across the stage, microphone in hand. She hammered the change theme at every opportunity. Her campaign banners now proclaimed "Hillary: the Change we Need!" and "Working For Change, Working For You." Even the folks doing introductions were roped into the act. In Ottumwa, the poor Ordinary American introducing Clinton had trouble delivering the ham-fisted text given to her. She haltingly read, "I know that . . . Hillary is . . . a . . . change-agent because . . . she has been doing this all her life."

The problem for Clinton is that she follows her call for change by citing a failure to bring change, her 1993 attempt at creating government-run health care. "When I was fortunate enough to go to Washington to be part of my husband's team," she says, "we tackled one of the hardest problems we have: health care. . . . And we weren't successful the first time, but you know what? I'm glad we tried. And I learned a lot, because we were standing up for what was right." The dissonance is jarring—though, who knows? The "Hillary as Change-Maker" theme calls to mind George W. Bush's response to a McCain surge early in the 2000 primary season: Bush reinvented himself as the "Reformer with Results"—and went on to win the nomination.

While health care is the centerpiece of the new Clinton campaign, she still mentions a few other issues. One of her big applause lines is, "We are going to end the unfunded mandate known as No Child Left Behind!" The crowds love it, although no one seems aware that she voted *for* No Child Left Behind. And while her speeches are mostly free of policy substance, she paused midway through her five-day tour to roll out a few nanny-state proposals: a 90-day halt to home foreclosures, a five-year freeze on rate adjustments for subprime mortgages, and federal assistance for weatherizing homes.

On Iraq, however, Clinton really does seem to be changing. For most of the campaign she has tried to evade the question of Iraq, mentioning it only in passing. To this end she developed an effective tactic: Her standard line is to say that as president she will "bring our troops home from Iraq"—here there is always tremendous applause, but she barrels through it, quickly adding—"as quickly and responsibly as possible." In practice, it's difficult, and sometimes impossible, to hear that important qualifier.

She used that formulation at the beginning of the change tour, but on day three she used a new one: "I've had a historian tell me that this may be the most difficult set of challenges since Harry Truman succeeded

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Franklin Roosevelt," she said. "We have two wars: one to end, and one to fight and to win." It was the first time I've heard her openly reject the idea of victory in Iraq. Sure enough, day five of the tour became Iraq day, where she claimed that ending the Iraq war would be her "top priority" as president, with the first soldiers pulling out within 60 days of her inauguration. So much for "as quickly and responsibly as possible."

There were other signs in Iowa that Clinton was lurching without thinking. Some took the form of nonsequiturs. Talking about the S-chip program, she claimed, "We're fighting with George W. Bush who'd rather give no-bid contracts to Halliburton than give health care to American children." When in doubt, trot out Halliburton. Speaking about fiscal responsibility, she said, "We need to quit borrowing so much money from foreign countries. We are in debt to countries from China to Mexico. We borrow billions of dollars from them to give to the Saudis to buy oil." Which isn't quite how it works, but never mind. In another speech she said that acupuncture and other "nontraditional" medical practices ought to be covered by health insurance.

Yet, despite everything, it's not clear that the campaign should be as panicked as it seems to be. Clinton still leads in some of the Iowa polls, and her crowds were large and supportive, if not overly enthusiastic. Partly that may have to do with age. Clinton went out of her way to poke fun at her own age (60), presumably to draw a contrast with the 46-year-old Obama. And the people at her events were overwhelmingly older, with the median age probably between 45 and 50.

These more mature voters may lack the intensity of Obama's hip, Facebooked masses. But on Caucus Day, January 3, Iowa's three big universities will be on winter break, and young people will be distracted by parties and the Orange Bowl. By contrast, Clinton's supporters aren't going anywhere. "We keep track, because it started, last spring, us noticing that we had a lot of people in their 90s who wanted to caucus for us," Hillary told one crowd. "So we started keeping our list of people in their 90s. Well the other day, we broke through the barrier—a 102-year-old man is determined to caucus for us, and he's asked his 81-year-old son to take him."

Clinton's back-to-the-future type of change may be just their cup of tea. ♦

Dingell Bells

Congressional Democrats' Christmas gift for U.S. automakers.

BY HENRY PAYNE & SHIKHA DALMIA

Detroit

Representative John Dingell, the powerful Michigan Democrat, prevented fellow Democrats from slaughtering Detroit auto companies during the recent battle in Congress over the energy bill. But this may be Dingell's—and the Big Three's—last stand as the green revolution overtakes the proletarian revolution among the priorities of the Democratic party.

In the new era, it is American car consumers who will suffer collateral damage—while victory over climate change will remain elusive.

The cornerstone of the energy bill signed Wednesday by President Bush is the raising of so-called Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards to mandate a 40 percent increase in auto fuel efficiency by 2020. First conceived in the wake of the 1970s oil embargo (at a time when global *cooling* hype was at its peak), CAFE sought to reduce America's "dependence" on foreign oil. But since passage in 1975 the policy has had the opposite effect as better fuel economy made it cheaper for Americans to drive more, increasing U.S. auto fuel consumption 20 percent and imported oil's share of the U.S. market from 35 percent to 59 percent.

Despite CAFE's failure, Washington has opted for the program's biggest expansion in 30 years. Global-warming fever, rising gas prices, and Detroit's declining economic importance conspired to make this CAFE's moment. Though Republican presidents have historically stood against tougher regulations, in this case the Bush administration actually initiated the increase. Desperate to prove his Iraq adventure was not motivated by a lust for oil, President Bush has made curing America's "oil addiction" a domestic policy priority.

But the biggest push for CAFE came from within the Democratic party. Democratic circles once regarded foreign cars as a treasonous assault on American workers. Now, however, Detroit's once iconic carmakers have become environmentally incorrect. Indeed, congressmen Ed Markey (D-Mass.) and Greg Walden (R-Ore.) publicly bragged about owning Toyota hybrids during a recent hearing of the House Select Committee for Energy Independence and Global Warming.

Given this backdrop, Detroit's goal this time was not to dodge stricter CAFE standards—but to minimize their damage. In this the automakers succeeded rather well, thanks to octogenarian John Dingell's unflinching advocacy.

For starters, Dingell not only reinstated the ethanol loophole the Senate bill had scrapped—but he actually expanded it to include other alternative fuels such as biodiesels. The loop-

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hole gives automakers fuel economy credits for building vehicles that can run on alternative fuels—whether consumers fill them with these fuels or not. Dingell also bought the industry new efficiency credits. For example, if a company achieved more than the mandated 40 percent increase in fuel economy for its smaller-vehicle fleet, it could apply the balance to its SUVs. And the industry kept differential fuel economy standards for cars and light trucks—instead of requiring that trucks meet the same stringent standards as cars, as the Senate bill, under pressure from environmental groups, had mandated.

But Dingell's special gift to Detroit was his success in forcing a radical overhaul of CAFE standards that is far more favorable to them than their Asian competitors. The original CAFE standards set a fixed standard of 27.5 mpg for cars and 20 mpg for trucks. This amounted to a doubling of fuel economy and disproportionately affected Detroit, which manufactured a fuller range of vehicles than Japanese auto companies, with their specialization in fuel-efficient compact cars.

The new CAFE standards do not set absolute gas-mileage requirements for vehicles. Rather, they require every company to increase its fuel efficiency by 40 percent. This will effectively hold Japanese carmakers to a higher fuel economy standard given that their vehicles get better gas mileage to begin with. Thus, a spokesman for the Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, Charles Territo, notes that the 40 percent increase will likely translate into an overall 32 mpg for Chrysler vehicles but 38 mpg for Honda.

The Bush administration estimates the new standards will cost the industry $85 billion. Though they may cost Japanese carmakers more, American carmakers will still have a harder time complying given their worse financial situation. But both will have to divert research dollars from cars that consumers prefer.

A recent *Consumer Reports* survey found that 70 percent of buyers want more fuel-efficient vehicles—but only 50 percent are willing to sacrifice size and performance in that quest. This market reality is why, even as engine efficiency improved 1.5 percent annually for the last 20 years, automakers have channeled those gains not toward better gas mileage but toward greater horsepower.

The net effect of the new CAFE standards therefore will be to thwart consumer desire as carmakers are forced to overhaul their product lines to emphasize either smaller cars or large hybrid-engine vehicles that, on average, cost $5,000 more than the nonhybrid versions. Jesse Toprak, an auto analyst with Edmunds.com, maintains the 35 mpg mandate is so onerous that large, gas-powered SUVs might well go the way of the dinosaur—despite their popularity and superior safety record.

But will this sacrifice curb climate change? Not really. John Christy, University of Alabama climatologist, maintains that even if the entire world adopted a fuel efficiency standard of 45 mpg, "the net effect would reduce projected warming by about 0.05 degrees Fahrenheit by 2100."

John Dingell bought time for U.S. automakers endangered by the quixotic crusades of climate warriors—but he won't live forever. Their fate will remain precarious, unless cooler heads—or cooler air—prevails. ♦

Campaign Standard

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New Hampshire Blues

The new Vermont.

BY SETH GITELL

Salem, New Hampshire

In late November, questioners at a three-hour Barack Obama forum in Portsmouth seemed determined to drive the candidate straight to the fringes. Obama and his foreign policy and national security advisers—among them Susan Rice, Richard Danzig, and Anthony Lake—were in New Hampshire to demonstrate the seriousness of his policies and his résumé, but the questions came at them from far left field.

Take this earnest query from a self-described "potter" from Exeter: "I've had a U.N. flag flying from my front porch since the beginning of the war. It pains me to think of how our respect for the United Nations has been drained away in these years under the current administration. I want to know what you would do to restore our respect as a country for the United Nations and the United Nations' respect for America?"

In other parts of the country, the U.N. might be viewed with skepticism—even with fear by conspiracists of another sort, the black helicopter crowd. Not in New Hampshire. (It was left to Obama, incidentally, to caution: "The U.N. has its flaws.") The U.N. question was by no means unique.

A few weeks earlier a Hillary Clinton town meeting in Peterborough came to a halt amid hooting and applause when a questioner, who boasted of never having had "a dryer or an air conditioner," queried the candidate about what she would do to change the more than "six years we have been subjected to fear-mongering." Mrs. Clinton, who called the question "eloquent," gave an answer juxtaposing the need to respond to the September 11 attacks and Franklin Roosevelt's famous words, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

Such encounters are common on the Democratic side, so much so that a visitor who hasn't been to New Hampshire in a while might wonder what's happened to the Granite State, known for its flinty and self-reliant residents in their small-town settings worthy of Norman Rockwell. In the 1992 Democratic primary, when Paul Tsongas, a Greek American raised as a fiscally conservative Yankee, defeated Bill Clinton here, talk was still of the economy, the budget deficit, and health care. Just eight years ago, New Hampshire voters rebuffed the lofty and sometimes aloof rhetoric of Bill Bradley for Al Gore, a candidate then focused on mundane lunch pail issues.

That was a long time ago, and New Hampshire today has as much in common with itself back then as the Gore of today has with candidate Gore in 2000. New Hampshire is a state that's gone blue, even deep blue, a fact that is hard to escape at campaign events around the state. Obama and Clinton routinely draw large crowds, bigger this year than the Republicans'—a reality driven home by the 8,500 voters who showed up on a snowy night in Manchester to see Obama appear with Oprah Winfrey.

And just last year, the Democratic party made strides in New Hampshire that would have seemed inconceivable a decade ago. In state races in 2006, the Democrats retained the governor's office, both houses of the legislature, and the executive council (a five-seat elected executive body). At the federal level, Democrats captured both House seats, with Paul Hodes and Carol Shea-Porter replacing Charles Bass and Jeb Bradley, respectively. Hodes had run for Congress in 2004, but Shea-Porter had entered the limelight that year as a protester wearing a "Turn Your Back on Bush" T-shirt at a campaign event for the president. The changing electoral tide has invigorated the state's Democratic activists, so much so that they seem to demonstrate more partisan vigor even than their neighbors to the south in Massachusetts.

New Hampshire really has changed in many ways. Demographers like Peter Francese note that of its 1.3 million people almost 500,000 have arrived in the last two decades. And, according to a recent study by the University of New Hampshire's Carsey Institute, 207,000 people moved in and 188,000 left between 2001 and 2005, a period that coincides with the post-9/11 awakening of the progressive wing of the Democratic party. The Institute estimates that 23.5 percent of the people voting on January 8 will be first-time New Hampshire voters.

Not all these newcomers are politically identical. Andrew Smith, the director of UNH's Survey Center, maintains, for example, that many of the Massachusetts expatriates in the southern tier who fled high taxes and housing prices are now the most Republican-leaning voters in the state, which still has no income tax.

But there are two other groups that are well represented at the unceasing daytime town meetings and campaign events during primary season. The first are affluent and highly educated retirees from other northeastern states, drawn to New Hampshire by its pastoral environs and low costs. They have the time, money, and interest to listen to candidates unveil their proposals in person, instead of watching them on C-SPAN. Fergus Cullen, the chairman of New Hampshire's Republican party, concedes that these voters "tend to be not that good for Republicans"—though he takes solace in the fact that the state is still far more Independent (44 percent)

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and Republican (30 percent) than it is Democratic (26 percent).

A portion of the state's proliferating Independent voters seem to be the political equivalent of locavores—those who eat only food produced within, say, 50 miles of their homes. These folks come to New Hampshire's academic centers—Peterborough, Durham, Exeter—looking for clean air, organically farmed foodstuffs, and community. They're not so different from their counterparts in Vermont, or in College Town, USA, but they stand out in a state with such a small population. Quips Dante Scala, a political science professor at UNH, of his state's increasing resemblance to Vermont, in some places it "looks like there is some kind of infiltration taking place."

A series of candidates have run for the Democratic nomination claiming the outsider's mantle. Many of them have done quite well in New Hampshire—Gene McCarthy almost beat Lyndon Johnson in 1968, Gary Hart bested Walter Mondale in 1984. The state's Democrats seem more liberal and anti-establishment than ever. We'll see who that will help on January 8. ♦

Do They Know It's Christmas?

Not in Burma and Eritrea.

BY PAUL MARSHALL

For Christians—and many Muslims—the main reason to celebrate this Christmas is, of course, Jesus' birth. But there are also trends in the church worldwide that make this Advent season at once a time of especial hope and a time of great suffering and darkness.

In China, despite ongoing repression (in early December, 270 house-church pastors were arrested in the city of Linyi alone), Christianity is expanding at a rate that has few parallels in history. Estimates placing the total number at over 80 million are no longer considered outlandish. Similar growth has taken place in Africa, which is now majority Christian and is likely soon to have more Christians than any other continent.

In purely numerical terms, Christianity is the world's fastest growing religion. Two-thirds of Christians and four-fifths of active Christians live outside the West, so Christianity now may well be the world's largest non-Western religion.

But for probably hundreds of millions, Christmas is shadowed by pain and fear, since this is usually the peak season for anti-Christian attacks in Pakistan, India, Sudan, Nigeria, and beyond. It is also a time when the Chinese and Vietnamese governments are prone to arrest their unregistered believers.

Violence continues in Nigeria, where tens of thousands have died in conflicts around the spread of Islamic law. Nigerian Christians are also often the victims when others produce allegedly blasphemous drawings. During the 2006 "Danish cartoon riots," Muslims rioting in Borno State killed 65 and destroyed 57 churches and 250 businesses. Persecution continues in Laos, India, Iraq, Turkey, Ethiopia, Sudan, Belarus, and elsewhere. Some Christian leaders in Gaza have been murdered while others have had to flee. Even in Britain, newspapers are reporting threats to Muslim converts to Christianity: Many remain in hiding, and one has had to move 45 times.

Other examples could be given, but two of the worst, Burma and Eritrea, receive scant attention because their repressions do not fit any wider international political agendas, hence their victims are among the world's most forgotten people.

Burma made international news this year when, in August and September, thousands of courageous Buddhist monks led peaceful demonstrations against the military regime, which responded with mass killings, beatings, and arrests of monks. Equally brave democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, under house arrest, still gains some attention. But the regime's destruction of its ethnic and religious minorities seldom receives coverage, though it rivals that in Darfur.

The government's program of "Burmanization" includes not only privileges for ethnic Burmans but also promotion of Buddhism in the name of "national solidarity." The Religious Affairs Ministry is on the grounds of the World Peace Pagoda (Kaba Aye) in Rangoon, the residence for senior Buddhist monks. As shown by the Buddhist-led demonstrations this fall, this campaign is not conducted by true Buddhist leaders: They too are monitored and repressed. In a country where almost everyone is persecuted, however, the religious minorities are more so.

The minority ethnic groups have significant Christian, Muslim, and animist communities. The Chin, Kachin, and Karenni are about 90 percent Christian. The Naga have significant numbers of Christians, and the Karen are about 40 percent Christian. The government's ethnic and religious cleansing of these groups verges on the genocidal, including destruction of villages, land confiscation, forced labor, use of human minesweepers, and rape and torture—especially in the Karen, Shan, and Mon states. More than 150,000 people, predominantly Karen and Karennis, are

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Young Christian Karen sing carols, on the Thai-Burma border, December 2006.

AP PHOTO / FREE BURMA RANGERS-HO

in refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border. A further 200,000 Shan refugees are thought to be in Thailand without recognition or camp facilities. At least 1,000,000 people are internally displaced. Since 1996, the army has destroyed over 3,000 villages in eastern Burma.

This repression has specific religious elements. Mosque and church construction is forbidden. Christians are forced to engage in destruction of churches, and Muslims of mosques. On pain of death they are conscripted into forced labor, including building pagodas and monasteries. There is forced conversion. In Chin State unmarried Buddhist government soldiers have been encouraged, with offers of higher rank and privileges, to marry and convert Christian Chin women. Torture is widespread, with reports this fall of prisoners being roasted over fires.

A rival to Burma's brutality is Eritrea which, since its 1993 independence from Ethiopia, has maintained itself as a militarily mobilized national security state. Only four religious groups—Catholic, Evangelical Lutheran, and Orthodox Christianity, and Sunni Islam—are allowed. Adherents of other faiths are viciously attacked, especially Pentecostals and other evangelicals. In compulsory military service, Bible reading and prayer are banned. Violators may be imprisoned and required to sign statements renouncing their belief as a condition of release. In one instance parents were asked to sign a document stating that their children would be liable to execution if taking part in forbidden religious activities. Unauthorized meetings of more than seven are forbidden: Entire wedding parties have been arrested.

The number of imprisoned evangelicals is probably over 2,000, some 10 percent of the country's total. Incarceration is brutal, with underground cells or metal shipping containers serving as especially severe punishment cells. The Bada detention center is more than 200 feet below sea level and can have temperatures over 130 degrees. People die or go insane. In one incident in 2003, 57 teenagers found with Bibles at a summer military camp were held jailed in metal containers to force them to abandon their faith, and all but six died. In 2005, 161 young people were killed attempting to flee the harsh conditions.

Torture is commonplace, especially tying prisoners in painfully contorted positions for hours or days at a time. In October 2006, two Christians, Immanuel Andegergesh and Kibrom Firemichel, were tortured to death in a military camp. In February of this year, Magos Solomon Semere died under torture at the Adi-Nefase Military Confinement facility outside Assab. On September 5, a 33-year-old woman, Nigisti Haile, was tortured to death at the Wi'a Military Training Center for refusing to recant her Christian faith.

For those who celebrate Christmas and those who do not, this season is an excellent time to remember these and other forgotten people of the world. And New Year's is a good time to resolve that they shall be less forgotten. ♦

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EARL KELENY

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The Learning Disabled Education Expert

Jonathan Kozol's crusade to prevent school reform

By Jonathan Leaf

Jonathan Kozol is back. The leftist education expert has been promoting his latest book—*Letters to a Young Teacher*—preaching his gospel on NPR stations, at radical churches, and at book stores across the country. He is a seductive figure in the pulpit, spreading a message of antagonism to every education reform. Though he claims that American schools are part of a domestic system of apartheid, he campaigns against charter schools, vouchers, testing, and any attempt to circumscribe the power of the teachers' unions.

Kozol's impact has been enormous. The national phenomenon of judges' compelling states to change their tax codes to increase funding for schools in poor districts was driven by the widespread credence given to his 1991 book *Savage Inequalities*, which sold over 250,000 copies in hardcover alone. As the Manhattan Institute's Marcus Winters noted, "Not only are many of his books bestsellers, but they have become staples on education-course syllabi. Even education researchers think his work has value: He has been cited 1,790 times in journals counted in the Social Science Citation Index, quite a feat for a popular author." Among those who praise him are Marian Wright Edelman, Bill Moyers, and Howard Zinn. When teachers' unions across the country fight voucher proposals, he is the first—often the only—authority they quote. But it is not only education professionals that Kozol has influenced. His 1967 account of his first weeks and months working as a teacher, *Death at an Early Age*, sold more than two million copies.

Necessarily, there have been many honors. Kozol is one of the few nonpoliticians to receive the National Education Association's annual Friend of Education award. (He won it *before* Bill and Hillary Clinton, before Paul Wellstone, and even before Ted Kennedy.) He has also won the National Book Award, the Robert F. Kennedy Book Award, the Conscience-in-Media Award of the American Society of Journalists and Authors, plus the Guggenheim (twice), Rockefeller, Ford, and Field fellowships.

This past summer Kozol was the subject of dozens of newspaper and magazine profiles for his "partial hunger strike" to oppose congressional extension of the No Child Left Behind program. And he doesn't stop at education causes; he is one of the token intellectuals signed onto ImpeachForPeace.org, a celebrity group calling for the president's impeachment. His name is listed just between top-40 radio personality Casey Kasem and actress Jessica Lange.

One of Kozol's relentless campaigns is against charter schools—public schools run independently of local bureaucracies and often without the involvement of teachers' unions. Research on charter schools has shown that they often produce better results, and at lower cost, than regular public schools. What's more, competition from charter schools appears to prompt improved performance from regular public schools with which they compete for students and funds—as charter school advocates predicted. Kozol will have none of this.

In the September 2005 *Harper's*, he went on the attack. In an essay entitled "Still Separate, Still Unequal: America's Educational Apartheid," Kozol observed:

> Many educators make the argument today that given the demographics of large cities like New York and their suburban areas, our only realistic goal should be the nurturing of strong, empowered, and well-funded schools in segregated neighborhoods. Black school officials in these situations have sometimes conveyed to me a bitter and clear-sighted recognition that they're being asked, essentially, to mediate and render functional an uncontested separation between children of their race and children of white people living sometimes in a distant section of their town and sometimes in almost their own immediate communities.

The possibility that some educators and politicians may merely wish to make these schools *better* worries and frustrates Kozol. For him, creating good schools in black neighborhoods for primarily black student populations isn't a good thing—and it shouldn't be the goal—it's a form of "apartheid."

Playwright Jonathan Leaf worked for many years in New York City's public schools.

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Kozol particularly derides the education research of John Chubb and Terry Moe, whose groundbreaking work suggests that improving individual schools can lift student performance, irrespective of a student's socioeconomic background. This work is both important and controversial, and it's consistent with claims that Kozol himself has made throughout his career as a self-styled advocate for poor children that the conditions of schools are important. Yet Kozol dismisses their research out of hand as it argues for a market in education. He is a committed enemy of educational choice, and that matters more than data. Indeed, he has consistently suggested that collecting data on student performance is itself a serious problem.

Throughout his writings, Kozol has presented himself as concerned above all for the poor and for minorities, and he says that it is for this reason that he has made "defending" public education his foremost theme. Yet here's a strange thing: Kozol himself abhors public schools. As he quite rightly observed in the opening sentences of his 1981 book *On Being a Teacher*, the present-day public school is a "dehumanizing institution." "Students reside within this house of lies for only twelve years at a stretch. . . . Their teachers often are condemned to a life sentence."

On Being a Teacher is a very revealing book. It shows how odd Kozol is in the role of an education advocate. He thinks it is imperative for teachers to break down the dehumanizing distinctions, to stop thinking of themselves as being different in any way from their students and make all school records available to students. "The cumulative folder is the school board's version of the secret records kept on citizens by the FBI. It holds the same potential dangers for students." What's more, in the ideal school, he explains, students should not "line up elegantly beside the door, wait for [the teacher's] signal and then file to the stairs." This is behaving like "William Calley's soldiers marching to My Lai." Better still, a teacher should make regular unsupervised afternoon visits to her students' homes and become a "co-worker and friend." (Kozol does not bother addressing the risks of molestation this might present, nor speak of the effect of the loss of authority for the teacher.)

And then there is what he thinks students should be taught. He says children should learn that Abraham Lincoln was "profoundly racist," that Martin Luther King Jr. thought that "America is the greatest purveyor of violence in the world," and that John Foster Dulles was a warmonger like the Nazi diplomat Joachim von Ribbentrop.

How did Kozol arrive at these unorthodox opinions? Curiously, although he has made his name as a former teacher speaking out for more money for ghetto schools, he actually only taught ever so briefly—for just a portion of one semester in 1964—in a ghetto school. Indeed, while he has written extensively about secondary schools, and always with a smug and assured tone of inside knowledge, he was never a regular high school teacher. His own teaching experiences were almost entirely in an elementary school in the affluent suburb of Boston where he grew up. He has so little real knowledge of the poorest schools that his books contain risible errors and suspicious-sounding quotations.

Kozol never intended to be a teacher. He wanted to be a novelist and authored the comically bad *Fume of Poppies* (1958). Here's an excerpt:

> Before the warm fire, Wendy and I took off our clothes. She slipped off her sweater, pulled it over her head, raising her arms. The white of her belly was lovely and gay. The fire beat at us. Then she took off her britches. Her legs stood arrow-tall on the floor.

The novel is a *Bildungsroman* describing the protagonist's affair with a proud Wasp-y girl, their troubles, and their eventual marriage.

Not many years after the book's failure, Kozol took his first job teaching, in Roxbury, Massachusetts. He was soon fired, his dismissal arising out of his decision to teach some Langston Hughes poems to his fourth-grade students even though Hughes was not on the list of accepted writers that the district's school board provided him. In *Death at an Early Age*, Kozol presents himself as an effective and inspiring teacher who arrived following a period during which the children to whom he was assigned hadn't had a regular teacher in months. He claims that even though the children made progress during his time as their instructor, he was seen as a troublemaker and was instructed not to ever seek employment in the district ever again.

The logic here is consistent with Kozol's view that urban public schools are grossly mismanaged, "dehumanizing," and troubled. What's peculiar is that he could not draw the obvious moral of his story. The problem with the Roxbury public school class he led was not a want of funds

Kozol is a committed enemy of educational choice, and that matters more than data. Indeed, he has consistently suggested that collecting data on student performance is itself a serious problem.

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to find a good teacher. In spite of the low pay offered, the school had unearthed a Harvard-educated Rhodes scholar and published novelist to teach their fourth graders. No, the difficulty was that the school didn't want a Harvard-educated Rhodes scholar. In Kozol's view, he made the mediocrities running his school uneasy, and they preferred a rotating stream of substitute teachers to a teacher who made them feel inadequate. Might competition have been a remedy for this entrenched and willful fecklessness?

The philosophy Kozol presents in *On Being a Teacher* is a curious amalgam of traditional Marxism and racial grievance-mongering. He emphasizes the importance of concealing one's extreme left-wing views. So, while he devotes an entire chapter to the subject of teaching children not to give the Pledge of Allegiance, he also advises parents and teachers on how to prevent this decision from appearing on a student's transcript. The book includes a model letter from a parent requesting that his child not give the Pledge and the suggestion to threaten legal action if the child is written up in any official or unofficial records for refusing to recite it.

For Kozol, the primary job of a school is to prepare the student, and so society, for radical transformation. He attacks Arizona's stated policy that it is the job of the schools to "augment a child's love of country . . . appreciation of traditional values." On the contrary, Kozol writes, "schools exist primarily to destroy such loyalty." He is harshly critical of 19th-century public school advocate Horace Mann for endorsing the school system as a way to protect "the rights of person, property and character." Rather, according to Kozol, schools must enlighten students about essential truths. For example, children should know:

> In plain terms, "Free World" ends up with three simple meanings: free opportunities for very large profits by the U.S. corporations; free use of land or harbors by the U.S. military; free opportunity for the uninhibited exploitation of the poor, carried out by the power of a self-serving upper-class that operates in close collaboration with the military forces.

Kozol goes on to say that teachers should use textbooks written by students as a way of utilizing new viewpoints and getting away from the flag-waving in the standard history textbooks written, as they are, by professionals. The things Kozol has to say about actual teaching in this supposed study of the essentials of pedagogy are almost always off the wall.

Throughout his books, Kozol is unwaveringly scathing about the United States. It is a running theme. As is his admiration for life in Fidel Castro's Cuba. His writings on the country clearly demonstrate his loyalties. In *Children of the Revolution* (1980), written after expeditions to Cuba in 1976 and 1977 and as Cuban troops were arriving in Africa with the goal of turning Angola into a totalitarian state, Kozol presented an astonishingly romantic view of Communist dictatorship. Did he really think that the country's claim of 2 percent illiteracy rate was accurate when UNESCO researchers, as he acknowledges, found rates many times higher? Did he really think that it was important that "El Jefe" himself worked on the model sentences used for teaching adult illiterates to read like, "The *campesinos* now at last are owners of their land"?

The book is full of Cuban workers claiming that production had skyrocketed since the revolution and students who lack the "sense of anguish . . . of almost any secondary school in the United States." For Kozol, this is a consequence of the absence of capitalist conflict and exploitation and the "sense of shared achievement—hard work that remains at all times one good notch below the level of competitive obsession—and always too, a willingness to laugh, and tease, and play, especially to tease *oneself*." A Cuban woman explained to him that "freedom means you are free from *international capitalist exploitation!*" Another explained that "freedom of speech is going to be important if you want to build up solidarity among the people in a land that is oppressed." And a Cuban man told him: "In our society we are *already* free from exploitation now." (Italics in the original.)

Kozol's most influential book remains *Savage Inequalities*. In it he argues for a redistribution of funds for schools in ghetto neighborhoods and against school reforms that might help children escape from these schools. That the book has become a touchstone is undeniable—it has been cited by judges in rulings on school funding. But it is not a work of investigative reporting or scholarship; it is rather a polemic by a true believer indifferent to facts and evidence.

Savage Inequalities opens with a 37-page account of the horrors of a school in the almost all-black city of East St. Louis, Illinois. The narrative includes discussions of toxic waste in the area of the school building, understaffed classrooms, the chipped paint in the halls, and the bad food in the cafeteria. We are even told that there is the possibility of cholera and typhoid in East St. Louis. As a contrast with this school, Kozol reports on a lovely white school in a nearby suburb. But, on the last page of the opening chapter, he slips in an immensely interesting fact: *School spending in East St. Louis is above the average in the state!* The school's rock-bottom achievements are not the result of rock-bottom spending. How then can increased fund-

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ing be the solution if it isn't the cause of the supposed problem?

Nor is this the only instance where Kozol relies on examples that are overturned by data. Later in the book, he makes an extended comparison between schools in Princeton, New Jersey, and troubled ghetto schools in Jersey City. Kozol mentions that Princeton was the highest-spending district in the state. He fails to mention that Jersey City was only slightly behind it in spending on a list of the state's dozens of school districts.

Savage Inequalities is full of barely credible details. For example, he describes a high school chemistry lab section in the East St. Louis school which has too many students attending—typically more then 30—making it hard for the teacher to supervise. I found myself wondering which East St. Louis chem lab has *too much* attendance. As a former teacher in an urban public high school, I'm inclined to think such a class purely mythical. As in so many instances where Kozol refers to or quotes someone providing dubious evidence, no name is provided for the teacher. Throughout *Savage Inequalities* are batches of quotations from teachers and administrators that sound peculiarly like Kozol's own writing. A teacher—again not identified—in my hometown of Trenton matter-of-factly refers to the problem of "immiseration." It hardly inspires confidence in his assertions.

And then there are the obvious inventions. Kozol claims that a teacher in the South Bronx can't find seats for her students as she has 40 kids in her class. But New York City schools are not allowed to have more than 34 students in a high school class and 27 in a grade school class unless the subject is a special one like physical education or music. Even if a teacher wants to keep extra students in a class, a union rep will file a grievance and force a change. Additionally, there is again the question of whether a ghetto school really has the problem of *too much* student attendance. In many years working in such schools in New York City, I have never seen a regular high school class after the first week of the semester with 25 students, and I have rarely seen one with 20. I did, however, once arrive to assist with a class in Harlem, which had four adults—two teachers and two teachers' aides—but only two students.

Absent from this extended diatribe is any data to support his main contention that school spending and class size play a role in educational outcomes—i.e., performance as measured on exams. There are several reasons for this evasion. The first is that little such data exists. As academics have known for many years, states that spend more on their schools often have the worst educational performance and some of the states that spend the least per pupil—like North Dakota and Utah—have among the best.

There is also little reliable evidence that class size influences educational performance. Kozol likes to cite a single study done in Tennessee 20 years ago. But many other studies have come to opposite conclusions—and, even in the one Tennessee study, the effects found were small. In any event, Kozol has been quite open for many years about his hostility to state-mandated testing of students, maintaining that such exams are both racist and inherently damaging to students.

This remains the refrain in *Letters to a Young Teacher*, his newest book: All reforms are racist and bad for students. Among its chapter headings is "The Single Worst, Most Dangerous Idea"—about vouchers. They are such a bad idea because "of how hard it is for many of the parents . . . to get to the place they're supposed to go on the appointed day, and then to make a well-informed decision." It is much easier, of course, for enlightened people like Jonathan Kozol to make sensible decisions for other people's children.

He is also against vocational schools for low-performing students, even though research shows that such schools raise income levels and other basic quality of life indices for low-performing students. His animosity towards parochial schools as an alternative to the worst public schools goes without saying—no matter the mountain of evidence for their virtues in improved student performance and behavior, and their modest cost. He also attacks the Gates Foundation, which is spending vast sums on ghetto schools as he has long called for, because the foundation is insufficiently geared towards putting black and white children into the same classroom.

As we have seen, Kozol dislikes the current public schools, is against choice and competition among schools, disdains vocational instruction, and sees state-mandated testing of students as misleading, unhelpful, and biased. He is a deeply frustrated man. We live in a prosperous society that rejects his goal of radical social reform, and so Kozol spends his life promoting resentment. Confronted by facts and evidence that stand contrary to his ideals, he seeks to poison the wells of argument by throwing in intellectually dishonest terms like *apartheid* and by emphasizing half-baked notions for which there is no consistent evidence.

A wealth of research now exists arguing for school choice, and decades of failure by a unionized, monopoly public school system presents a clear message about what needs to be done to improve our schools and to better the lives of those rich and poor who attend them. But Jonathan Kozol, like so many true believers, is past examining the facts. Ironically, he is an education expert incapable of learning. ♦

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You deserve a factual look at . . .

Jerusalem (II)

Should the U.S. Embassy be moved to the capital of Israel?

In a previous clarifying message we showed that before the Six-Day War in 1967, the claim that Jerusalem was a Muslim/Arab city had seldom been asserted and that such claim had come about only in modern times. The status of Jerusalem continues to be of great importance. The Arabs clamorously insist that at least the eastern part of the city should be yielded to them. The Israelis insist that Jerusalem continue as the indivisible capital of their country.

What are the facts?

Jerusalem – reunited and indivisible. Ever since the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, all American governments and Congress have confirmed their conviction that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel and that, once reunited, it should remain indivisible.

Before the Six-Day War in 1967 the city was divided, the Jordanians having occupied the eastern part since the War of Liberation in 1948. During their 19-year reign, all Jewish residents were driven out and all Jewish places of worship closed or destroyed. The various Christian denominations operated under the strict control of Muslim authorities.

> "The status of Jerusalem goes to the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict. To deny the status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel questions the legitimacy of the state."

All this ended in 1967 with the liberation of all of Jerusalem by the Israel Defense Forces and with the reunification of the city. Access to all holy places became available to all. The many religious bodies in the holy city (and in all of Israel) are able to pursue their activities without any restrictions. Jerusalem is today truly a free and open city. Just as the whole world rejoiced when the ugly wall dividing Berlin was torn down, so do we rejoice that the wall, the barbed wire and the machine gun emplacements dividing the city were finally torn down.

U.S. Embassy not in Israel's capital. While the Palestinians lay claim to the eastern part of Jerusalem and wish it to become the capital of a hoped-for Palestinian state, nobody, not even the Arabs, questions the western part of the city to be Israeli. It is remarkable therefore that, despite this universal recognition, the United States has steadfastly insisted on placing and keeping its embassy in Tel Aviv, the major commercial city, instead of in Jerusalem, Israel's capital and the seat of the Knesset (parliament), the Supreme Court, and of all government offices. It is as if a government accredited to the United States were to insist on keeping its embassy in, say, New York, rather than in Washington D.C.

With the U.S. in the lead, all other countries have also located their embassies in Tel Aviv. It is a bizarre situation: All ambassadors and their staffs must make almost daily trips to Jerusalem, because no government business is conducted in Tel Aviv. The United States maintains diplomatic relations with over 150 countries. In all of them, the U.S. Embassy is located in the nation's designated capital. The only exception is Israel where, so far, our government has insisted on locating its embassy in a city other than the capital.

Congress in favor of moving embassy to Jerusalem. Despite the fact that, prior to their elections, both Presidents Bush and President Clinton assured the public that the U.S. Embassy would be moved to Israel's capital, the Administration has until now blocked all moves in that direction, declaring that it would jeopardize the so-called "final status" talks on Jerusalem.

Leaders of Congress – both Republican and Democratic – have introduced legislation by which the U.S. Embassy would have to be moved to Jerusalem within the next three or four years. And that was about ten years ago. That legislation has been endorsed by 93 senators. The U.S. has a lease on a 10-acre embassy lot in Talpiot, a totally Jewish neighborhood in West Jerusalem. It is to be hoped therefore that, before too long, reality will prevail and that the U.S. Embassy in Israel will indeed be located in Jerusalem – the capital of one of our country's closest allies. Three of the current Republican candidates to the presidency have promised that, if elected, they would move the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem.

The main reason given for not moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem is that it would violate "Arab sensitivities." That might indeed be the case. But while there would be some posturing, none of the Arab states could afford to do much else. Egypt would certainly not refuse its yearly multi-billion dollar subsidy from Washington. King Abdullah of Jordan would not jeopardize the political and financial lifeline that the U.S. has extended to him. Saudi Arabia would make some perfunctory noises, but that would be just about all. The status of Jerusalem goes to the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict. To deny the status of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel questions the legitimacy of the state. The move of the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem will signal once and for all that there will be no U.S. or world support for the division of Jerusalem and for the establishment – in any part of it – as the capital of a new Arab state.

This message has been published and paid for by

FLAME

Facts and Logic About the Middle East
P.O. Box 590359 ■ San Francisco, CA 94159
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Ding Zilin, left, with her son and husband in an undated photograph taken before the 1989 demonstrations in Tiananmen Square

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Let a Hundred Flowers Be Crushed

The precarious lives of China's dissidents

By Ellen Bork

I arrived in Hangzhou on a plane from Beijing one Saturday in August. Wen picked me up at the airport. We had met once, years before, at an international gathering in Jakarta. Back then, at dinner one night, the Americans around the table had argued over China policy. Afterward, I'd given Wen my card, telling him, a bit apprehensively, that I was pretty tough on his government. "Please continue," he'd said. I had often remembered that encounter but never expected to see him again. It was a surprise to find he would be my guide for the second leg of a trip friends had helped arrange so that I could meet Chinese dissidents in Beijing and Hangzhou.

The week before I arrived, some 40 intellectuals, journalists, lawyers, and human rights activists had released a letter decrying the condition of human rights, particularly at a time when Chinese leaders were using the 2008 Summer Olympic Games, to be held in Beijing, to enhance China's international prestige. Over the ten days I was in China, I met several dissidents who had signed the open letter.

Hangzhou is a tourist city with a large lake and historic villas where Mao Zedong, Chiang Kai-shek, and literary figures used to vacation. Wen, who is in his mid-30s, spent several years working in the import-export business before turning more or less full time to writing and civic action. Fifteen minutes into our ride, he told me that two black cars had been with us since the airport. They followed us for the next three days.

I hadn't noticed any surveillance in Beijing, and neither had my guide there—a scientist whose career had been derailed by his involvement in the protests at Tiananmen Square, violently suppressed by the government on June 4, 1989. Yet I'd visited one of China's most prominent dissidents, Ding Zilin, the mother of a teenager killed in the Tiananmen massacre. Possibly someone watching her apartment, or that of another dissident I visited, the literary critic Liu Xiaobo, had seen me and alerted the authorities in Hangzhou. Before my trip, my friends and I had agreed that it was actually a good thing for the authorities to know the dissidents had supporters outside China. Now, seeing the black cars in the side-view mirror, I still believed that, but I couldn't help worrying.

Wen had planned to register my hotel room in his name so I wouldn't have to turn over my passport to the hotel, which reports information to security officials. We went through with this plan even though it didn't make sense any more. Over the next few days I met with a human rights lawyer, a journalist who had been fired for reporting on the demolition of an unauthorized church building, and a writer who publishes articles with titles like "Hu Jintao: Kneel Down Before Me" on overseas Chinese websites.

The dissidents in China walk a tightrope. The Communist party allows certain things, but draws the line at others. The dissidents I am writing about here communicate fairly easily with each other and with the outside world. When they are careful, there is a kind of modus vivendi with the authorities. But there are some things they know they cannot do without serious consequences.

The case of my guide in Beijing, the scientist Jiang Qisheng, is a good example. The party refuses to reverse the official position that the demonstrations of 1989, joined by protesters in cities throughout China, were the work of a "small handful" of counterrevolutionaries. To commemorate Tiananmen as a tragedy and question the official position is to challenge the party's legitimacy. In 1999, Jiang wrote an open letter encouraging Chinese people to remember and honor the victims of Tiananmen. Then he talked about it on Radio Free Asia, the U.S.-funded service that broadcasts into China in Mandarin. He was promptly arrested and sent to jail for four years.

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Ellen Bork works at the human rights group Freedom House.

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"What I did, what landed me in prison, was really quite simple," he wrote in the *New York Review of Books* after he was released in 2003. "I just said in public what my fellow citizens were saying" in those "nooks in China where ordinary people have determined that they can speak their minds without incurring disaster." The party cannot tolerate any call to the Chinese people on an issue as sensitive as Tiananmen; speaking directly to the nation on Radio Free Asia—as opposed to writing for a mainly American audience—crossed a line.

One problem is knowing where the line is. Another is deciding whether you are willing to cross it.

On its face, the August letter is quite bold. It condemned human rights abuses and showed the signers have no illusions that merely hosting the games will moderate the behavior of China's Communist party rulers. "We, as citizens of the People's Republic of China, ought to be feeling pride in our country's glory in hosting the Games, whose purposes include the symbolization of peace, friendship, and fairness in the world community. . . . Instead we feel disappointment and doubt as we witness the continuing systematic denial of the human rights of our fellow citizens even while—and sometimes because—Olympic preparations are moving forward."

Lawyer Pu Zhiqiang, 2004

Yet the letter—reported around the world and relayed back into China via Chinese language websites monitored by the regime—stopped short of calling for a boycott of the Olympic games, which the signers thought would trigger a harsh reaction from the government. The letter also asked for the creation of an independent group to monitor preparations for the Olympics. The dissidents know, however, that if they actually set up such an independent group, it would be crushed.

The letter also did not mention the Tiananmen massacre, despite the pall it still casts over China. In the days after the letter's release, I was able to visit Ding and her husband, both retired professors in their early 70s. After their 17-year-old son was killed, Ding began gathering information about what happened the night of the Tiananmen massacre. She started by collecting the names of the victims. Despite official harassment, she interviewed relatives of the victims to document their deaths and counter the official denial; one man told her that, looking for his brother at a hospital morgue, he was shown just a hand. Ding and another mother began speaking to foreign reporters about their children. Other relatives joined their efforts. They became the Tiananmen Mothers, a group of nearly 200. Now they themselves are getting old and beginning to die.

Several years ago, security officials came to Ding and told her they wouldn't post agents at her building if she promised not to meet with foreigners and journalists at home. She refused. It was their job to keep people away, she said. If visitors made it to her apartment, she would be a good hostess. She gave me tea. Even a few months ago, she said, it would not have been possible to meet her at home, but the authorities "have put on their masks" for the Olympics. She expects a few months of relative latitude before things tighten up for the next June 4 anniversary, then the games. The line has moved, for a time. It will move back.

We talked about the importance of memory and efforts made by people in other countries to accept history, like the German artist who installs small plaques in the sidewalk outside addresses from which Jews were deported to death camps. I told Ding about two exiled Iranian sisters, Roya and Ladan Boroumand, who have created a database of human rights violations as an online memorial to victims of the Islamic revolution. Their father was assassinated in Paris for his opposition to the Khomeini regime. Ding's face drew taut and she made a sound of empathy.

After her son was killed, Ding Zilin went to buy a cake to mark his birthday. A security officer followed her. They waited in silence until the clerk brought out the cake. The icing read, "We miss you." The agent's eyes became wet with tears.

I asked Ding if she would show me where her son was killed. She went to another room to get her glasses. She returned and drew a small circle on my tourist map at an intersection about four miles from the square. Most of the victims were killed on the outskirts as troops rolled in to

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secure the city. "Muxidi," she said. He was shot in the back while trying to take cover in the entrance to the Muxidi subway stop.

The Tiananmen massacre and the ensuing political crackdown also took a toll on Pu Zhiqiant, a lawyer who works on politically sensitive cases. His participation in the protests at Tiananmen as a youth ruined his chances for an academic career. He says he became a lawyer because he couldn't do anything else. Pu is a broad shouldered man with a crew cut who carries his own tea leaves and thermos in a crocheted bag. "Sometimes I forget I am a lawyer," he says. "I go a little too far. . . . I feel just as if I was accused."

In 2004, Pu defended two writers who had been sued for libel by a local party official for portraying local party officials in Anhui province as thugs. In an emotional, free-wheeling courtroom argument, Pu cited *New York Times* v. *Sullivan*, a landmark American libel case, and the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The case has still not been decided, which in a legal system overseen by the Communist party counts as something of a victory.

Pu told me that one year around the June 4 anniversary, when extra security measures are taken, some agents were assigned to sit in his law office all day. Pu left them in a conference room with a DVD playing *The Lives of Others*, the Oscar-winning film about an agent of the Stasi, the East German Ministry for State Security, who develops sympathy for the playwright he is spying on. Pu said he felt a little bad that the disc was pirated.

Ding Zilin, 2002

REUTERS PHOTO ARCHIVE

The afternoon the dissidents' letter was released in August, a security official telephoned Liu Xiaobo and asked to meet with him. Because Liu's wife, Xia, doesn't like having policemen in the apartment, they met at a tea house. Liu is in his early 50s, a bit gangly with a short, stubbly haircut and big glasses. In 1989, eager to show intellectuals' support for the demonstrators, he had returned from abroad to join the democracy protests. After the massacre, Liu had been detained for nearly two years. Then again in 1996, he'd been summarily sentenced to three years' "reeducation through labor"—a practice that allows for imprisonment without trial—for signing a letter that criticized President Jiang Zemin.

Liu received me in his living room and study, dark with books and decorated with his wife's paintings and photographs. One of her photographic subjects is dolls with distorted facial expressions. She gave me a stack of her pictures to look through. One of them showed a doll, as if gasping for air, with a sheet of plastic wrapped around its head. "That is from when he was in jail," she said.

I asked about the relationship between the dissidents and their minders. No one I'd spoken with had mentioned any instance of personal cruelty. Most, it seemed, had a story of kindness shown by a member of the security apparatus—though always when no one else was around.

Liu explained the difference between people's public and private face in China's Communist party dictatorship. Privately, people can behave decently. In public, people have to behave in a particular way to protect themselves. Each of the dissidents I met has broken with this convention of the system. All have chosen to merge their public and private selves as much as they can, by signing an open letter, talking freely about the Tiananmen massacre, or meeting me. They are waiting for the line to move far enough that to behave this way—to integrate one's public and private selves—is no longer an act of courage.

One day in Hangzhou, Wen and I had some time to kill. We spent a few hours on a boat on the lake on the west side of town. While our police detail stayed on the shore, Wen told me about a visit he'd had the year before. Liu Xiaobo, the literary critic I'd met in Beijing, and Liu's wife had come to see him. Tailed by police, they went to a scenic lake outside of Hangzhou. There was only one boat, and Wen had already rented it. The policemen came on board. The dissidents and the policemen sat in silence ten feet apart, floating on the water. At lunch later that day, Wen tried to pay the bill and discovered that the policemen had reciprocated for the boat ride by paying the check.

My trip ended without incident. At least, for me. In the months since I returned to Washington, however, two of the people I met but do not mention here have been arrested. I have an idea of what they did to cross the line, but it's hard to know for sure. ♦

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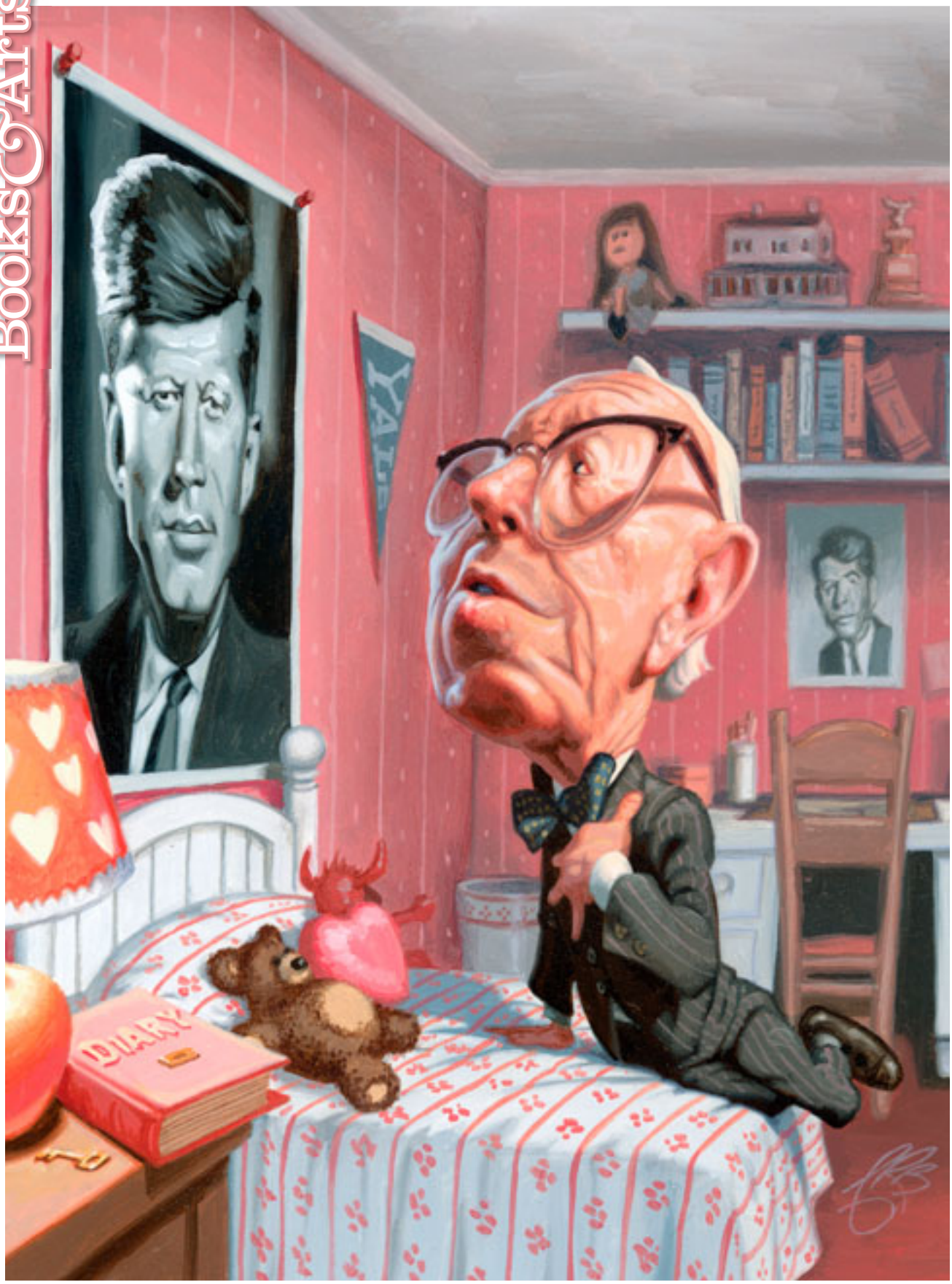

JAMES BENNETT

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Dear Diary, I Think I'm in Love

The confessions of Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. BY P.J. O'ROURKE

This is a bad, vain, dull, repulsive book. Don't read it. I didn't.

Oops, have I committed the previous sentence to print? I've just broken the most sacred vow of book reviewers. I've confessed to not reading the book I'm reviewing. Jonathan Yardley will stalk me through the streets armed with his razor-sharp critique. The Library of Congress building will come crashing down upon my head. My career is over. But before I go to my doom, let me try to explain.

You see there was this fellow, Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., who died early this year and is on his way to being forgotten but who, unfortunately, isn't quite there yet. Schlesinger spent some of his time being a Harvard historian and all of his time kissing the behinds of rich people, famous people, and people who were powerful in the Democratic party. He accomplished only one thing of note. (If you don't count his unfinished, multivolume history of the FDR administration and his *A Thousand Days* buncombe about JFK, and you certainly shouldn't.)

In 1945, Schlesinger went back in time to retro-behind-kiss Andrew Jackson. He wrote *The Age of Jackson*, glorifying the ignorant backwoods thug who perpetrated genocide upon the Indians, created the spoils system in Washington, and fathered that bastard political party of rum, rebellion, and Hillary Rodham. The rest of Schlesinger's life was spent engaged in such activities as being a speechwriter for Adlai Stevenson and in doing things even less important than that, if you can imagine any.

So this Schlesinger fellow kept what you and I would call a diary but what, when Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., Harvard professor, special assistant to President John F. Kennedy, and winner of the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize (twice each), does it, is called *Journals*. He scribbles away from 1952 until 2000, producing some 6,000 pages, which his sons Andrew and Stephen—and bless them for it—have condensed. The resulting tome is no thicker than the average skull on the current generation of Kennedys. And honest, I meant to read it all. I did get through the entire first paragraph. Here's an excerpt from it concerning the Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner of March 29, 1952:

> I borrowed a black tie from Phil Graham. . . . Making our way to our table, we became entangled in one of the head table lines. In quick succession came the three nicest men in public life—Wilson Wyatt, Adlai Stevenson, Averell Harriman. Averell suggested that we go out for a drink afterward.

Journals
1952-2000
by Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr.
Penguin, 928 pp., $40

Ouch! Ow! Those are big names being dropped. Do not read *Journals* standing up in your stocking feet. Any given hundred words of *Schlesinjournaling* loses its grip on enough weighty monikers to break every toe.

But I limped on. I made it all the way to page 12 before I was stopped cold by this sentence about Adlai Stevenson: "He is the one man in politics today who strikes an authentically new and fresh note." And that note would be? Ah, the note that was passed to Adlai in every classroom of grade school, high school, and Princeton—the small, crumpled piece of paper upon which was written, "LOSER!!!"

Meanwhile, in the preceding 11 pages of type, our boy Artie has been subtly, carefully not *quite* taking all the credit for getting Adlai Stevenson the 1952 Democratic nomination. This raises several questions. First, Huh? What a load of baloney. Second, Why would anyone want *any* of the credit for that? And third, why doesn't Schlesinger just lie? It's his personal journal. If you can't fool yourself, who can you fool? Come on, Art, go for it. Say, "Without me Adlai Stevenson would have been nothing but a footnote to the history of wooly-headed liberalism!" It's not as if anybody's going to call you on it.

P.J. O'Rourke is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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But Schlesinger dare not tell an outright lie. In one respect, *Journals* is a diary like younger sisters used to keep, with the key to the little lock on its pink vinyl cover conveniently "hidden" so that if big brother happens to read certain passages aloud to a particular handsome athlete . . .

The handsome athlete (well, sportsman, anyway) that Arthur had a crush on was JFK. Thus we see Kennedy in the middle of the 1960 Democratic primary campaign:

"Jack seemed tired, but was obviously in good spirits. His lack of pretense was refreshing; for example, he kept answering ringing phones himself."

He answers his own phone!

We see Kennedy on his yacht shooting at floating Coke bottles with "Prince Radziwill": "Jack is plainly an excellent shot . . . Then we drank Bloody Marys, swam from the boat and finally settled down for an excellent lunch. After lunch, cigars and conversation."

He spoke to me!

And we see *President* Kennedy summoning some piece of speechwriting crap that he'd dumped on Arthur: "The next morning the president called to ask about the paragraph. I brought it to his bedroom about 9:30. He was eating his breakfast in bed. He had only his pajama pants on."

Ooooooo!

Yet *Journals* is so much more than gush. Its pages also crack open a hellgate to give us a peek at the eternally consuming fires of egotistic solipsism to which the soul of a liberal is forever condemned. Not even the undying love that Arthur Schlesinger felt for Kennedy money, power, and prestige could redeem poor Art from the perdition that awaits the *bien pensant*. His is the sin of pride, such that produces the New Deal, the Fair Deal, the New Frontier, the Great Society. It manifests itself in the deeds of the mighty. Or in the case of Arthur Schlesinger, it manifests itself in mighty bad taste. This, *this*, is his private reaction when his friend, his mentor, his beau ideal is murdered:

> November 23
>
> I heard the terrible news as I was sipping cocktails with Kay Graham, Ken Galbraith and the editors of *Newsweek*. Kay and I had flown in from Washington; we were there to discuss the future of the back of *Newsweek*'s book. A man entered in his shirtsleeves and said, a little tentatively . . .

A man in his *shirtsleeves*—in the presence of Kay Graham, Ken Galbraith, and Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr.!

Let us skim forward to June 1968, and see if Art is better able to keep his composure when Robert Kennedy is killed:

> It is beyond belief, but it has happened—it has happened again.
>
> On Tuesday, June 4, I went to Chicago for a conference on Vietnam sponsored by the Adlai Stevenson Institute. Saul Bellow and I had met at the airport [blah blah blah] . . . He had suggested that I come over to his apartment Tuesday evening [blah blah blah] . . . I took Frances FitzGerald over there [blah blah blah] . . . Then Dick Wade, who was there, dropped Frankie at the Center for Continuing Education [blah blah blah-blah-blah].

We are fully 140 words into the journal entry before we get to "Kennedy's been shot." And even here, in his brief quotation of a phone call from Dick Wade, Schlesinger manages to drop another name, "Steve Smith too, I guess."

Okay, Art, that's two wrong. But you're still eligible for a posthumous consolation prize—free shredding of all remaindered copies of *Journals*. Just turn to the 1969 chapter and tell us your deep feelings when you learned about the political assassination (albeit self-inflicted) of the third Kennedy brother:

> The last few days were, of course, shadowed by the distressing news about Ted Kennedy. We heard about it first on the yacht on Sunday afternoon and learned more details when we reached Paris. On Wednesday night in New York, I called Jimmy Wechsler, Joe Rauh, Ken Galbraith and others and found general gloom.
>
> On Thursday I sat after lunch with Scotty Reston and Tom Wicker at the Century. They were both sympathetic . . .

And I feel sorry for you, too, Arthur.

Naturally we cannot expect a man with credentials such as Arthur's to be merely a jerk; he's an idiot, too. The quickest riffle through *Journals* is enough to prove it. Said Arthur, after a 10-day visit to the USSR in 1982: "I fear that those who think the Soviet Union is on the verge of economic and social collapse are kidding themselves." It just so happens that I was in the USSR myself for about 10 days in 1982. I was an ignorant, neophyte foreign correspondent on my first overseas assignment. But I did notice that the Soviet Union was on the verge of economic and social collapse.

Schlesinger's ability to make people look like cretins is by no means limited to himself. He visits President Truman and emerges from the Oval Office with this unlikely quote from the former haberdasher: "The professional politician, he said, is the straightest-shooting man in the country. [Alert readers note foretokening of JFK on the yacht.] I don't mean the city machine type; but the man who makes a career of elective politics. The biggest crooks in the country are the businessmen."

Even Jack Kennedy doesn't escape. JFK visited Dwight D. Eisenhower in California in 1962, and when Kennedy got back he (according to Schlesinger) told Schlesinger, "You know what he said to me? We were talking about Laos. Eisenhower said, 'A State Department man told me—*and it was odd coming from him*—that Laos is a nation of homosexuals.'" Schlesinger then goes on to say, "The President repeated the phrase I have italicized with a kind of wonder." I have parsed and parsed this passage, and for the life of me I can't figure out who comes off as the biggest idiot. Bigoted Ike? Hopelessly hetero naïf JFK? A certain striped-pants cookie-pusher? Or long-bow-pulling Arthur?

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'Happy Birthday, Mr. President,' May 19, 1962: Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. (right)

TIME & LIFE PICTURES / GETTY IMAGES

Then there is a splendidly stupid entry about a get-together with Mick Jagger that makes one wonder if Schlesinger's whole life wasn't spent on some moron preserve or nincompoop reservation:

> We . . . made our way to the west side for a party at Mick Jagger's. The whole thing was rather mysterious—especially why we were asked. But Jerry Hall . . . is an amiable, very pretty, tallish Texan [blah blah blah]. We expected a packed house with a lot of drinking, cocaine, noise, etc. Instead, it was a party of only moderate size and, so far as we could see (we left shortly before 1 A.M.), entirely seemly. Most people were young, except for Norman Mailer, Andy Warhol, Jean Stein and Ahmet Ertegun (who could not get over the fact that we were there—actually we met Mick Jagger first at his house). . . . [blah blah blah] Mick Jagger appeared from some upstairs retreat and sat down and talked for half an hour or so, mostly about communism, war, the threat of Cap Weinberger and so on. He is alert, funny, intelligent (Alexandra told me later he had attended LSE [the London School of Economics]—can this be so?) . . . [blah blah blah] But I still could not understand why we were there.

Ditto for reading this book.

In fact, ditto for writing this review. I'd like to escape from further comment on *Journals*. I'm looking for a way out of this article. I consult the notes that I took as I flipped through the opus. "I cannot bear to read it, partly because of the vulgarity of the diction, partly because of the nakedness of the self-exposure, partly because of the frustration over not being able to review it. I cannot recall any political autobiography in American history which has represented quite such an orgy in unconscious self-revelation," I wrote.

Except I didn't write that. I figure, as long as I've admitted not reading this book, I might as well go the whole hog and be a plagiarist, too. Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. wrote that. He thought he was writing about *Six Crises* by Richard Nixon. But as usual, Arthur was wrong. ♦

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Alexander McCall Smith

Edinburgh Rhapsodies

The lives and loves of Scotland's intellectual gentlefolk.

BY ELIZABETH POWERS

Before the postmodernists deconstructed it for us, the enclosed moral world was one of the chief attractions of the 19th-century European novel. Think Austen, Eliot, Trollope. The charming novels of Alexander McCall Smith attempt something similar for our current age of moral uncertainty, when even educated people sport tattoos and women engage in serial relationships with unsuitable men.

Portraying the ways that people attempt to do the right thing, these novels also inadvertently suggest clues as to how we have reached this point. McCall Smith has written—and I think we should take him at his word—that his books "represent the range of things I would like to say about the world."

Best known for the hugely successful No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency series, as of early this year in its eighth installment, McCall Smith is a veritable writing machine, and the fourth volume in The Sunday Philosophy Club series, *The Careful Use of Compliments*, has just appeared. (I leave out his numerous books for children.)

The Careful Use of Compliments
An Isabel Dalhousie Novel
by Alexander McCall Smith
Pantheon, 247 pp., $21.95

Love Over Scotland
The New 44 Scotland Street Novel
by Alexander McCall Smith
Anchor, 356 pp., $13.95

Compliments features Isabel Dalhousie, an independently wealthy woman in her forties, living discreetly in a Victorian house in Edinburgh (where McCall Smith, in his spare time, is a professor of medical law), complete with music room, cherished Scottish watercolors, summer house with garden, full-time housekeeper, and resident fox. A Ph.D. from Cambridge, where she wrote a dissertation on Wittgenstein, she is an independent scholar, editing from her library the *Review of Applied Ethics*.

Isabel has "intuitions," which lead her to inquiries about matters that, as her niece Cat says, mean getting "involved in things that are really none of your business." Here, while defending the *Review* against academic interlopers, she clears up a mystery concerning the possible forgery of a painting attributed to an apparently dead artist. This takes her to the island of Jura, known for its distillery and for Barnhill, the house where George Orwell began writing *1984* at the end of World War II.

Completing this year's troika is *Love Over Scotland*, the third in a series that began with *44 Scotland Street*, which portrays the often-disorderly lives of inhabitants of Edinburgh, many of them resident in an apartment building of that name. A clue to the "exquisite scheme" (to use a term of Henry James) behind the moral world McCall Smith has created can be found in *44 Scotland Street*.

In a scene in that novel the intriguingly named painter Angus Lordie, a man of 50, advises a young woman of 20 not to waste her time on her passion for an unworthy young man. She replies that you can't stop yourself feeling something for somebody else. To which Lordie replies that, yes, you can: "You simply change the way you look at them." It requires an effort of the will, of course.

> This is exactly what the Professor of Aesthetics at Harvard did. She decided that she found palm trees beautiful—before that she thought them an unattractive sort of tree. Then she discovered that she liked the way their fronds made striped light. And after that, palm trees were beautiful.

The professor of aesthetics in question is Elaine Scarry. The reference to palm trees is from her small treatise *On Beauty and Being Just*, in which Alexander McCall Smith has read deeply. (Scarry's influence can also be seen in Zadie Smith's novel *On Beauty*.)

To put the matter in its simplest terms, Scarry has sought to extend our regard for beautiful objects to the issue of social justice. In the first part of *On Beauty and Being Just*, she makes an intricate argument for the way Beauty trains us mentally to be more perceptive. She approaches the subject by elaborating on the experience that all of us have had in moving beyond youthful aesthetic enthusiasms: with training, we leave Norman Rockwell behind

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COLIN MCPHERSON / CORBIS

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and grapple with the challenge of works that might initially appear ugly—say, Matisse's palm trees. For Scarry, this process of intellectual self-correction can be applied to the moral world: We go from perception of "the fair" (lovely countenance) to receptiveness to "fairness" (as in equal distribution of goods).

McCall Smith has brought this idea down to earth, specifically to contemporary Edinburgh, to a familiar urban setting in which citizens, especially women, enjoy not only symphonies, theater, and art galleries but also wine bars, friendly cafés, and stores selling imported cheeses and olive oil. A feature of both the Philosophy Club and the Scotland series is a fullness of references to Scottish culture, while authentic local personalities have walk-on parts.

Real politics is absent, however, including terrorists and, indeed, foreign faces. Unlike his fellow Scots writer Ian Rankin, McCall Smith does not do evil. Instead, his novels concern contemporary manners, with the characters constantly engaged in the kind of reflection Scarry advocates. In her professional capacity, reviewing scholarly articles on the ethics of obesity, sexual morality, lying, even taxation, Isabel has much to chew on. That includes taxation, for a special issue of the *Review* on the subject:

> Why should the wealthy pay more tax than the poor? They did, or at least they did in most systems, but on what grounds was this defensible? Should taxation be used as a tool to redistribute wealth? She thought it should, and many others thought so as well, but it was not so clear that taxation was the most appropriate way to achieve that. Should governments perhaps be honest and say that they intended simply to confiscate assets over a certain level? She gave some thought to that, wondering how she would feel if the government started to take her capital away, beginning right now, appropriating her funds, turning them into military equipment and welfare payments and new roads, as governments tended to do.

Mostly characters are absorbed in frequent ruminations on the everyday unequal distribution of beauty, social gifts, and old-fashioned unfairness, and by their own unaided struggles to correct their judgments and behavior. As Isabel reflects, the old Scotland offers few guidelines:

> Old Edinburgh had been so sedate, prissy even—like a maiden aunt—and it had been an easy target. But had the correction gone too far? Old fashioned manners, courtesies, had been swept away everywhere, it seemed, to be replaced by indifference, by coolness. And yet that had not made people any more free; in fact, the opposite, surely, had happened, as the public space became more frightening, more dangerous.

McCall Smith is not a postmodernist, and his novels shine when he debunks political correctness. As an old-fashioned moralist he is of the opinion, as one character puts it, that all that is required to increase "the sum total of human happiness" are "little acts. Small things. A word of encouragement. A gesture of love. So easy."

McCall Smith is not a postmodernist, and his novels shine when he debunks political correctness. An old-fashioned moralist, he holds, as one character puts it, that all that is required to increase 'the sum total of human happiness' are 'little acts.'

The Scotland Street novels are a pageant of situations in which a community of souls extend such acts of kindness or reprimand themselves when they fall short. Their behavior is almost Christian; but this Edinburgh, confirming what we know about Europe, is a postreligious city, one characterized by the absolute absence of religious observance in the characters' lives. Among people who think all the time, religion is one subject that seldom enters their thoughts. Well, Edinburgh *was* home to David Hume and the Scottish Enlightenment.

The loss of anchoring in traditional values has a corollary in the powerful role of women in these novels. Most of the virtue, with a single exception, resides with them. Indeed, one character, reflecting on the contemporary devaluation of beauty and feeling, opines: "If things were to change, then the culture itself . . . had to become more feminine."

Well, maybe. Still, these specimens of advanced moral consciousness do have a shortcoming: Despite longings for a soulmate, they are invariably attracted by male physical beauty over the qualities that suggest solid, dependable mates. Thus, their relationships with men are unstable. Of course, none of them is pressed to find a husband or a protector (who needs one in a well-policed, well-regulated Western city?).

The independence of women correlates with the irrelevance of men, some of whom are treacherously handsome, some downright saps, but few matching the moral seriousness of the women. This uneven situation has led to a rather serious lapse on the part of ethics scholar Isabel Dalhousie. Despite wealth and evident attractiveness, Isabel has apparently had no relationships with men since being dumped years earlier by a caddish (but handsome) Irishman while she was on fellowship at Cornell.

Throughout the first three Philosophy Club volumes, her many reflections concerned the beauty of Jamie, a man in his mid-twenties who was once the boyfriend of her niece Cat. Reflection fueled desire, proximity led to action and, in a not-untypical postmodern turn of events, pregnancy. In this fourth installment she is a single mother of 40-plus while Jamie, a freelance bassoonist 20 years her junior with only a moderate income, seems (to me, anyway) in a somewhat untenable position. Isabel scarcely reflects on this uneven distribution of power while doing what is necessary (and, some might think, ethically questionable) to rout her academic opponents. As for baby Charlie: well, there is the full-time housekeeper.

Elaine Scarry take note: Appreciation for the fair does not necessarily lead to fairness. ♦

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WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

Weiner's World

The reductio ad absurdum *of conceptual art.*

BY MAUREEN MULLARKEY

Imaginary numbers are vital to modern mathematics. The discovery of imaginary art—a.k.a. conceptual art—in the 1960s was greeted as a breakthrough of comparable significance. It demonstrated, so the thinking went, that art was capable of the same heavy lifting required by more rigorous disciplines. In an era of vandalisms great and small, conceptual art combined the malice of deconstruction with the antics of Alan Kaprow's "happenings." Lawrence Weiner, now on show at New York's Whitney Museum, is a key figure of the movement. He helped put the torch to the traditional practice of painting and sculpture.

Lawrence Weiner: AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE
Whitney Museum of American Art

Conceptualism scorns material works of art and exalts the artist's mental labors instead. Execution of the concept is optional. Skills and aesthetic achievement do not apply. What counts is the artist's shining brainwork and subsequent commentary by Those Who Know. The aim is to demolish common understanding of the nature of art. A wrecking ball is better than a brush for effecting a Nietzschean upending of prevailing values. And this Whitney retrospective of Weiner's pranksmanship solemnizes the ethos of rebellion and disguised nihilism that rode Jefferson Airplane from the sixties into the Me Decade that followed. Those were the heydays of conceptual art.

In 1960, the 18-year-old Bronx-born artist jump-started his career by dynamiting holes (without permission) in a Mill Valley state park. He dubbed them "Cratering Pieces." On the *qui vive* to capture the zeitgeist, critics took the cue. They blessed the demolition and announced it a "work." The game was on. In the axis year 1968, Weiner turned to detonating language, too. Jacques Derrida's *Of Grammatology*, seedbed for deconstruction, was already on the stands. *The Order of Things*, Michel Foucault's assault on semantic habits, had appeared the year before. Relations between words and meanings, given an earlier shake by Dada texts, went into free fall. It was the cognoscenti's last joyride after the death of God.

Weiner seized the moment. He separated language from its communicative function with "word-works," nonconnotative phraselets broadcast on walls and building façades. Gigantic Post-It notes signifying nothing suited the times. To a generation whose critical capacities were capped by *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* and *The Hite Report*, AND THEN UTILISED AS TO ANOTHER GENDER (as the capitalized titles read) sounded recondite and worldly.

At the Whitney, strings of Weinerisms are stenciled on walls and floors like riddles of the sphinx. The procession is punctuated here and there with a dollop of paint, sea water, firecracker residue, or some other clue to the existential status of the artist.

Guerrilla theater begins in the elevator with a blotch on the carpet. A wall plaque declares the stain a creative act: AN AMOUNT OF BLEACH POURED UPON A RUG AND ALLOWED TO BLEACH. Elsewhere, in caps: TWO MINUTES OF SPRAY PAINT DIRECTLY UPON THE FLOOR FROM A STANDARD AEROSOL SPRAY CAN. Most lines have the ring of contrived enigma: EN ROUTE ON ANOTHER PLANE/EN ROUTE VIA ANOTHER ROUTE.

Do you need more? Photographs commemorate civic adventures such as the 2000 Public Art Fund project that cast Weiner's nonplusses onto 19 Manhattan manhole covers. Running the old cannabis trade route from the West Village to Washington Square, Union Square and Tompkins Square Park, each cast-iron plate carries the phrase: IN DIRECT LINE WITH ANOTHER AND THE NEXT. It is an apt motto for the persistent legacy of Abbie Hoffman and Timothy Leary.

Visually, the show is in the sententious tradition of embroidered sam-

Maureen Mullarkey writes about art for the New York Sun, *the* New Criterion, *and other publications.*

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plers. But with a crucial difference. Needlepoint aphorisms are tethered to communal trust in the correspondence between recognizable reality and language. Weiner's "theoretical messages" follow the Dadaist trajectory of what Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) hailed as "word salad." Left open "for translation, transference and transformation," they are applauded for their violence to intelligibility. Customers are invited to fabricate significance for themselves. As the catalog states: "Each person has a different relation to its content. . . . It is left to the viewer to construct meaning." STRETCHED TIGHTLY AS IS POSSIBLE [SATIN & PETROLEUM JELLY] is the sort of mannered incoherence that stokes curatorial cant. Dieter Schwartz, director of the Kunstmuseum Winterthur in Switzerland, trills: "By being linguistic, Weiner's works have the property . . . of having no properties."

SINK OR SWIM YOUR ASS GETS WET is not an insight that gets you up in the morning. But in the rhetorical milieu of the graduate art seminar, from which curators emerge, it is an epiphany. It affirms the artist as a handmaiden to analytic philosophy, French phenomenology, and linguistic theory. But of course. A knitted brow is part of the pose, the only thing left once artwork has been scuttled for the analysis of it. The catalog locates Weiner in the company of Noam Chomsky, Jean Piaget, Jacques Lacan, Roland Barthes, Jean Baudrillard, Michel Foucault, Alfred North Whitehead, and Jean-Paul Sartre. Comparison with the sociologist Baudrillard and the psychoanalyst Lacan is unwittingly double-edged. The philosopher Roger Scruton, in a critical essay, has charged both with charlatanism, calling them impostors who abuse the terms of their disciplines "to deceive the reader into thinking that they are thinking when in fact they are doing no such thing." Weiner's role, like theirs, is to subvert the thinking of others.

Man is made for meaning, a communal achievement realized in concert with what used to be called natural law. Only when language is judged a product of arbitrary will rather than of cognition can it be "left to the viewer to construct meaning." The assent to intellectual anarchy, popularized in the arts, reached its apogee in *Planned Parenthood* v. *Casey*'s famous defense of individualized deduction: "At the heart of liberty is the right to define one's own concept of existence, of meaning, of the universe, and the mystery of human life."

Only the mad, quarantined by unshared, idiosyncratic conceptions of reality, suffer that kind of freedom. The privatization of meaning signals something larger than an art-world posture. Antirational, it thwarts the basis for making the distinctions on which decisions, aesthetic and moral, rest.

The resentment of rationality and of socially embraced patterns of meaning is the inadmissible subject of the Weiner retrospective. ♦

His Shining Hour

Bill Charlap and his Trio are reinvigorating jazz.

BY JAY WEISER

The first time I heard them was in the late 1990s at Zinno's, a now-departed New York piano room/Italian restaurant that was my Friday night haunt—and it was a shock. It wasn't just the speed: Lots of jazz musicians can spit out the notes with the facility (and imagination) of a machine gun. It was the starts and stops—the hairpin turns—and the delicacy married to a ferocious drive. The Bill Charlap Trio, with the eponymous pianist at the helm, and bassist Peter Washington and drummer Kenny Washington (brothers in music only), has been a working group all that time—a rarity in jazz these days.

This year the trio recently issued its fifth American album, *Live at the Village Vanguard* (Blue Note), making use of the Vanguard's perfect acoustics. Like most of the group's work, it mainly relies on the composers of the Great American Songbook. *Live at the Village Vanguard* is unthemed, but previous albums have explored the music of George Gershwin (*Bill Charlap Plays George Gershwin: The American Soul*; Blue Note 2005) and Hoagy Carmichael (*Stardust*; Blue Note 2002), often using lesser-known tunes. *Somewhere* (Blue Note 2004) plumbs the slender Leonard Bernstein Broadway book for such jazz rarities as "Glitter and Be Gay" from *Candide* and "Ohio" from *Wonderful Town*. (Charlap considered, but didn't essay, *Wonderful Town's* "Wrong Note Rag," perhaps because Bernstein's tin ear for African-American music—rooted in the same contempt as his radical chic romance with the Black Panthers—resulted in a rhythmically thin, clichéd tune.) A sixth album, the Japanese import *'S Wonderful* (Venus 2002), has received only a limited U.S. release.

Given the trio's interest in melody, standards work better than highly technical jazz originals, but this repertory creates hazards of its own. Many other treatments of the standards are leaden in their reverence. (Ella Fitzgerald's zombie Songbook series, which raised the canon from the dead while sucking out its soul, is the most notorious example.) Sometimes the trio adds life through tempo changes, a common jazz technique: "My Shining Hour" (*Live at the Village Vanguard*) rockets Jerome Kern's shimmering ballad, underpinned by the steel-fingered Peter Washington's endless streams of 32nd notes, until Kenny Washington, always a melodic drum soloist, slows down his first chorus using brushes

Jay Weiser has written on jazz for the Village Voice, Down Beat, *and* Salon.

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on the snare, then re-accelerates with uptempo brush rolls on the tom-toms.

The trio also takes an unconventional approach to rhythm. Thinning out the patterns on each instrument, each player's part is dominated by a single line, particularly in the arranged sections. Charlap emphasizes single-note runs in the piano's upper register, while Kenny Washington relies on brushwork. With this evanescent sound, the interactions become clearer, and the spaces and tempo shifts get more emphasis than in groups that use a denser, more chorded style. In "America" from Bernstein's *West Side Story* (*Somewhere*), the trio transforms Bernstein's insistent triplets. Peter Washington starts unaccompanied, improvising over a four-note figure, on which Kenny Washington offers a few spare comments. The bass figure turns into a rolling pair of repeated triplets (off the beat, in contrast to Bernstein's original), and Kenny Washington adds an offbeat accent on the snare where the second beat of the original melody would have fallen. Charlap begins playing fragments of the original melody in single-note lines, adds sequences of chords as he improvises, then moves back to a single-note melody fragment that disappears into lower-register block chords, without ever fully stating the melody. The Middle Eastern sound totally transforms the jackhammer exuberance of the original.

On uptempo numbers, the trio comes out of Bud Powell's bebop by way of Tommy Flanagan, the tradition's flame-keeper of the 1980s and '90s; unlike its predecessors, it often collectively improvises the second chorus after the melody statement of the first chorus. Charlap favors blazing tempos supported by a steady pulse. Hoagy Carmichael's "Jubilee" (*Stardust*), introduced by Louis Armstrong in 1937 as a medium-tempo evocation of New Orleans, turns into a strut on steroids: Charlap opens with a marchlike three-note figure from the end of the melody and modulates it, stuttering the rhythms eight times before the trio launches into a series of vertiginous descents through the original chord structure.

Bill Charlap, 2005

The trio's Gershwin and Carmichael tributes, like many jazz albums of the last 15 years, feature multiple guest artists. While the guests are excellent musicians, they are unable to integrate into the tight dynamic of the trio, which turns into a highly professional, but unexceptional, rhythm section.

On "The Lady is a Tramp" (Lorenz Hart; *Live at the Village Vanguard*), Peter Washington builds a bass solo on a rocking three-note figure from the melody, which reappears in different guises. Charlap, playing over Kenny Washington's brushed swing cymbal beat, augments his spare single-note lines with strings of bass chords and octave runs, building from an almost subliminal left hand early in his solo to fully voiced counterpoint at the climax, and making more use of the lower register as he builds. This is as close to Oscar Peterson as he gets, and reflects a change from his approach to the group's first major flagwaver, "In the Still of the Night" (Cole Porter; *Written in the Stars*; Blue Note 2000). Even at its speediest, the trio conveys the thread of the song, never merely running the chord changes.

Ballads are often collectively improvised the whole way through, taking a page from the classic Bill Evans Trio of the early '60s, as can be heard by comparing the groups' versions of "Some Other Time" (the trio's on *Somewhere*; Evans's on his own live Village Vanguard session, *Waltz For Debby* [Riverside 1961]), though the Charlap Trio uses a more explicit pulse. On the glacial "It's Only a Paper Moon" (Harold Arlen; *Live at the Village Vanguard)*, as on most ballads, Kenny Washington becomes the primary timekeeper, using brushes on cymbals, while Peter Washington improvises under the melody. Charlap takes the melody line with single-note runs augmented with bluesy two-note figures, and with more space to fill, a fuller set of chords.

The trio's Gershwin and Carmichael tributes, like many jazz albums of the last 15 years, feature multiple guest artists. While the guests are excellent musicians, they are unable to integrate into the tight dynamic of the trio, which turns into a highly professional, but unexceptional, rhythm section. For an album to benefit from another instrument's added colors, the trio may need to find a single artist with the time to work into the groove. Charlap did this successfully in his own duo album with tenor saxophonist Houston Person, *You Taught My Heart to Sing* (Highnote 2006), where this least bluesy of pianists contrasts perfectly with his partner, who wears his blues reputation as a self-styled badge of honor.

The Bill Charlap Trio's lightness of touch and relentless propulsion reconfigure the standards. It's always worth hearing. ♦

NANCY KASZERMAN

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Marlowe's Anti-Heroes

Two novel versions of Elizabethan history plays.

BY EVE TUSHNET

There are ambitious decisions, and then there are cocky ones. Washington's Shakespeare Theatre chose to open its new theater space with productions of two plays by Christopher Marlowe, *Tamburlaine* and *Edward II*—thus challenging both the theater and the audience.

It's daring, first off, to make a case for the Shakespeare Theatre based not on the Bard but on his less-staged precursor and rival. In implicit argument that Marlowe is worth the attention lavished on him here, the theater expanded its usual para-theatrical programs to include not only lectures and tie-in film screenings, but also a daylong symposium on Marlowe's life and work, a partnership with the Rorschach Theatre Company's production of a biopic called *Kit Marlowe*, and a reading of *The Jew of Malta*. (No points for guessing why that one is rarely performed today.)

Tamburlaine
Edward II
Shakespeare Theatre, Washington
Through January 6, 2008

Then, too, *Tamburlaine* was chosen in part because its script spans three continents, allowing the theater to go all-out with the elaborate costumes and exotic trappings. The show's program, as the lady behind me noted with faint horror, includes not only a synopsis but a map. Opera-style supertitles inform us that we're in Bithynia, Larissa, and similar *Rough Guide to the Ancient World* locales.

Staging the two plays together really works. This *Tamburlaine*, on its own, might come across as three hours of colorfully dressed people hitting each other with sticks; this *Edward II* is not quite strong enough to stand on its own. But played against one another, they strikingly contrast different stripes of bad kingship, anti-sympathetic tragedy, and directorial styles. They should both be seen, and seen on consecutive or near-consecutive nights if possible.

The plays have a few minor similarities: They won't change the mind of anyone who thinks Marlowe can't write women, for example. Both the demi-tragic Zenocrate and the girlishly demonic Isabella don't quite work as characters. Zenocrate is an attempt to turn "girls like violence" into tragic queenship, and Isabella seems to veer back and forth from self-deluder who just wants her king back to furious dictatress who commits her own adultery in revenge.

Both plays include powerful scenes of humiliation of captives. Tamburlaine walks on his defeated kings, cages them in rags, harnesses them to pull his carriage. Edward is subjected to even more thorough humiliation. These scenes are in a way more disturbing than the scenes of battlefield carnage because they show how *imaginative* humans are at dehumanizing one another. In *Tamburlaine* the captives' humiliation is often not even the focus of the scene: The play itself enacts their marginalization, keeping the spotlight on their laughing, exuberant tormentors.

The plays have also an intriguing difference: Allah acts directly in *Tamburlaine*, whereas the Christian God is treated as a projection of societal power in *Edward II*. Every time an actor in *Tamburlaine* declaims about "great Mahomet!" you expect to hear thunderclaps. When Tamburlaine burns the Koran, he *immediately* falls ill, and begins his final decline. It's impossible to interpret this as coincidence.

By contrast, although churchmen like the ones Edward and Piers Gaveston mocked do play various roles in Edward's downfall—some hastening it, others allowing him sanctuary in a monastery—if God works at all in *Edward II* he works only through men acting in conflicting, ordinary ways. This makes *Tamburlaine* a more primary-colors, unsubtle play, but both approaches have their satisfactions.

(Refreshingly, both productions reject opportunities to turn every old play into a Maureen Dowd column. To the extent that there are contemporary resonances in the productions, it's because the cruelty of power, the actions or absence of God, and the tragedies of eros will find resonance in any age.)

The most striking similarity, however, is that both productions feature stars whose personal charisma can sell a deeply unsympathetic character: Tamburlaine is a sociopath and Edward a wastrel.

Avery Brooks's Tamburlaine is transparently having so much *fun* in the first half of the production that his audience can't help but find him sickly fascinating. Tamburlaine's laughter and his ironic blocking (playing intimidation scenes while lounging on the floor, for example) show an almost inhuman confidence, marking Tamburlaine as a man who can woo any woman and intimidate any foe—except God.

Wallace Acton's Edward II isn't nearly as intimidating. He's childish—like his queen, he seems unable to guess the consequences of his actions—and self-centered. But Acton and director Gale Edwards give us an Edward all but created by his clothes, by his social role. Acton wears his kingly robes like a second skin. His Edward never appears without his crown until he abdicates. There's a terrifically unsympathetic moment in which Edward pleads to be allowed to see his crown again, in almost the same terms he used earlier to plead for a glimpse of his doomed favorite Gaveston. The crown was so much a part of Acton's physical presence that his abdication is felt as an amputation, and his pleas seem the result of phantom pains in the lost limb. When Edward is

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stripped first of his robes and then of most of his clothing, Acton's physicality makes the humiliation all the more wrenching.

At the Shakespeare Theatre's symposium, Gale Edwards said that different audiences tended to empathize with different characters: On some nights Edward and Gaveston's first kiss drew applause, while on others it brought gasps of dismay. At times, her direction seemed to play up these shifts and ambiguities of sympathy: For example, Isabella, Edward, and Gaveston wear costumes that echo one another, all three in white at the beginning when they're most childlike, then Edward in black and Isabella in Mortimer's green once they begin to battle, then all three back to white for their helpless conclusions. But toward the end of the play Edward's perspective dominates to an extent that insightful costuming choices can't balance.

In the earlier parts of the play, we get lines indicating that Edward's frivolity may be draining the state coffers used to pay soldiers; we see his thoughtlessness; we get to stand outside him, even if only briefly. Yet once Edward's defeats begin, the production burrows so deep inside his own self-indulgent consciousness that it begins to feel like the audience is being bullied into sympathy with this deeply awful king.

In perhaps the most egregious example, Edwards chooses to set the refugee king in front of a stained-glass window depicting Jesus holding a little fluffy lamb—and then pose him so that he mirrors first the lamb, and then Jesus himself. Edward's dead lover appears as a white-winged angel; his assassin, the Luciferian-named Lightborn, gets not only the terrifically scary lines Marlowe wrote (delivered in perfect horror-movie cadences by James Konicek) but also an unnecessarily camp Mephistophelean cloud of acrid smoke to herald his arrival.

This doesn't work because it isn't necessary. Edward's humiliations toward the end are already intense enough. He's taunted, stripped, kicked; he dies by being raped with a poker in a sewer. But he is not a Jesus figure, and presenting him as one is either a tacky form of special pleading, or a misguided decision to trap the audience inside the mind of the king rather than allowing for a competing perspective.

David McCann as Bajazeth and Franchelle Stewart Dorn as Zabina in Tamburlaine

It's possible to direct *Edward II* so that Edward is basically sympathetic. Derek Jarman did it in 1991 in his unsettling movie, and he did it by being very angry. Outrage, as Harold Bloom has pointed out, is one of the most sympathetic of human emotions. Jarman's obvious fury at church and state give the movie an edge that this more lugubrious production doesn't quite attain.

"Lugubrious" is the last word anyone would associate with this *Tamburlaine*—or second-to-last, after "self-reflective." One of the difficulties of staging Marlowe is that when we hear that rangy, earthy, secretive Elizabethan language, we start expecting Shakespeare: troubled and divided consciousnesses, men and women who don't know their roles or their genres, characters who catch themselves in their own nets of words.

Neither Edward nor Tamburlaine fits this pattern. Neither of them gets even the weird, halting fit of self-recognition that Richard III gets in his almost goofily unwieldy "Richard is Richard; that is, I am I" speech. They get defeated, and that makes them grieve; but it doesn't, fundamentally, make them change. ♦

Vital Gore

Tim Burton's demon barber is not for the faint of heart.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

On Christmas night 1940, the theater critic Brooks Atkinson attended the Broadway opening of an innovative musical about an amoral nightclub entertainer. The Rodgers and Hart show *Pal Joey* may have the greatest score of any Broadway musical, was distinguished by the star-making performance of a little-known dancer from Pittsburgh named Gene Kelly, and overall remains a thrilling theatrical coup. But in his review, Atkinson could not get past its depiction of Joey's libertinism, which included an affair with a much older married woman.

Sweeney Todd
Directed by Tim Burton

"Although *Pal Joey* is expertly done," Atkinson wrote, "can you draw sweet water from a foul well?"

Fortunately for him, Atkinson was in retirement when Stephen Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* premiered on Broadway in 1979, since the challenge of having to write about it might have killed him. For if Atkinson found *Pal Joey*'s portrait of adultery distasteful,

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CAROL ROSEGG

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how could he have tolerated a musical—an opera, really—in which a psychotic Victorian man and his gleefully mercenary mistress murder random Londoners and grind up their dead bodies to use as filling for wildly popular meat pastries?

How could Atkinson have stomached the sight of the chorus, at the beginning of Act Two, shouting "God, that's good!" as they unknowingly gobbled down those cannibalistic treats? Right there on the stage of the Uris Theater, he would have had to take in the title character inviting unsuspecting men into his barber's chair, slitting their throats, and then opening a chute underneath the chair and sliding the corpses down into a bakehouse furnace room below.

Atkinson's concern about even portraying adulterous conduct onstage seems ridiculously quaint today. But to give him his due, he was merely echoing the sentiments of a good part of his *New York Times* readership in 1940. However, by 1979, when *Sweeney Todd* made its maiden appearance, there was not, nor could there have been, any similar talk. Audiences and critics alike had long before been carefully taught that to dismiss an ambitious work of art because its content might be offensive would open one up to charges of philistinism and Babbittry. *Sweeney Todd* is the most highly regarded musical of the past half-century. It has been revived twice in New York since its original production, and is now entering the classical repertory—the only Broadway musical to become accepted as a full-fledged opera aside from *Porgy and Bess*.

I, too, am a *Sweeney Todd* devotee. I think it is a magnificent thing that towers over every other piece of American theater in my lifetime. I have seen it five times and would happily see it a dozen more. If challenged, I might even be able to sing most of it, beginning to end, from memory. And I am lost in admiration for the new screen version, which is extraordinary: a brilliant truncation of Sondheim's sweeping three-hour tragedy into a brisk and intimate two-hour musical thriller.

The film, directed by Tim Burton from a screenplay by John Logan, is everything a *Sweeney Todd* fan could have hoped for. Even the riskiest choice—casting nonsingers in roles that ordinarily require performers with three-octave ranges—turns out to have been inspired. The numbers performed by costars Johnny Depp (amazing) and Helena Bonham Carter (surpassing all expectations) seem to emerge from their pained conversation and their deepest and darkest wishes, not from the impeccable diaphragms of practiced singers with years of training.

Johnny Depp

LEAH GALLO / DREAMWORKS LLC AND WARNER BROS. ENTERTAINMENT INC.

But it is impossible to discuss the *Sweeney Todd* movie without making the very simple point that any person who finds on-screen violence difficult to stomach should not even attempt to watch a moment of it after the 30-minute mark. In all its incarnations, *Sweeney Todd* is a work of surpassing beauty, but it also aims to frighten and disturb in the manner of Victorian melodramas and the Grand Guignol, the *fin-de-siècle* Paris theater that specialized in making its audiences believe eyes were being gouged out and innards pulled from the bodies of live actors on stage. The original Broadway director Harold Prince left as little to the imagination as he possibly could on a gargantuan Broadway stage, and induced gasps and cries of alarm even from audience members who were sitting 30 yards away from the action.

In the movie, throats are slit in close-up. Blood spatters the lens. Sound-effects specialists worked hard to perfect the gurgling and choking noises a victim of such a crime would emit, and they have succeeded. And when Sweeney Todd opens the trap door under his barber chair to dispose of his victim's body, Burton follows it down the chute until the head smashes into the concrete floor of the bakehouse, the body crumpling behind it.

Sondheim offers a savage irony in counterpoint, as Sweeney performs a heartbroken lament for the now-grown daughter ripped unjustly from him in her infancy by a judge who raped his wife, adopted the baby, and had him transported to Australia: "And in that darkness when I'm blind with what I can't forget," he sings, "It's always morning in my mind, my little lamb, my pet, Johanna."

The melody is gentle and mournful. And when he completes it, Sweeney garrots another customer. The gorgeous song serves to make the murder all the more horrible; the ugliness of the murder only highlights the beauty of the song. Even those in the audience who love slasher movies may be overwhelmed by the sequence, since it really does create an entirely new kind of horror-movie effect.

After Burton takes his audience into the bakehouse, where we see a huge vat of ground beef in which human fingers are clearly detectable, and where an innocent little boy is taught how to use the grinder, many people will have had more than enough, and they will be justified in walking out and demanding a refund at the box office.

Burton's decision to be brutal and graphic was a necessary one. If he had held back, Sweeney Todd might come across as lovable and his compatriot Mrs. Lovett as a distaff Oscar Madison from *The Odd Couple*, and the whole project would have descended into camp.

Tim Burton means business, and he has done right by *Sweeney Todd*. It is the best movie he has ever made, and it features the best performance Johnny Depp has ever given. But no one need feel himself a philistine or Babbitt if he has a visceral reaction comparable to Brooks Atkinson's about *Pal Joey* and decides that this remarkable movie isn't merely a foul well, but an open sewer. ♦

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"Mohammed Now Second Most Popular Boys' Name in Britain"
—Daily Mail, *December 19*

THE TIMES Monday December 24 2007

Births, Marriages and

And the children of Shobal were these, Alvan, and Manahath, and Ebal, Shepho, and Onam. And these are the children of Zibeon; both Ajah, and Anah; this was that Anah that found the mules in the wilderness, as he fed the asses of Zibeon the father.
Genesis 36.23-4 (KJV)

Births

BUCKPASSER Charlotte Anne-Louise Fredericka, born on December 18th at The South Cornholt Lying-In Hospital, to Giles and Hermione (nee Quark-Funwipe), sister to Lucinda and Mohammed.

FLYWHEEL The Earl and Countess Flywheel of The Drundge, Pimpleton nr. Ormalou-under-Wott, Herts., are pleased to welcome their son and heir, the Hon. Mohammed Francis Archibald Henry Dunwhistle-Trumpington, a brother for Penelope and Marigold, born at The Drundge, on December 21st.

MASON-deFORNIGATE On December 20th at The Axlebury Free Clinic and Rehabilitation Center, to Cassandra (nee Gaptooth) and Humphrey, a daughter, Philomena, a sister for Leonie, Ian, Cuthbert, Mohammed and Francesca.

PUSSWORTHY Gervase and Olivia (nee Gassmonger) announce the birth of their son, Mohammed James Greville Henry Alexander, on December 21 on the M3 bus between Hempstead and Harychest-on-Thames, a brother for Ophelia and Maude.

SCRATCHINGS On December 19th at The King George VII Hospital, to Lt. Col. Ivor and Miranda (nee Carpool-Carothers), a son, Miles Gerard Mohammed Horatio, a brother for Cecily and Julian.

Forthcoming Marriages

MR C.R.M.F. APNEA AND MISS H. SLEEP
The engagement is announced between Colin, younger son of Sir Wilfred and Lady

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